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THE CHRISTIAN CONVERSATIONALIST

R. W. WEAVER

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THE CHRISTIAN CONVERSATIONALIST

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The Christian Conversationalist

or, The Spiritual Apostolate

Dealing with the Problems of Individual Work for Individuals. By RUFUS WASHINGTON WEAVER, Th. D., with an Introduction by EDWIN M. POTEAT, D. D.

The sick soul needs not a lecture on medicine but a prescription.—DURYEA

PHILADELPHIA
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PREFACE

NEARLY nineteen centuries ago there gathered around a young teacher from Galilee a group of untrained but earnest young men. They came from the middle and the lower classes of society. They belonged to the plain people. As the months passed they dimly acquired their Master's point of view and slowly comprehended his thought. As they caught the meaning of his words new light burst upon them. They saw in him that which was more than human ; they saw in every man the possibility of the divine. New hopes were born. Then there came a day when all their hopes were buried. The body of their Master lay in Joseph's tomb. There came another day when these dead hopes rose to live eternally. Their Master again stood before them, the Conqueror of Death.

The evening of the resurrection day beheld the founding of the Spiritual Apostolate, an institution against which the gates of death have not prevailed. Its constitution was framed by its Founder : "Peace be unto you ; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Its power is divine : "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." Its authority extends to the pronouncement of the forgiveness of sins : "Whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them ; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

The Spiritual Apostolate, founded by Jesus Christ, has been and is the most potent factor in human history. By its mighty power, the course of the centuries has been changed, and from their ancient hinges the gates of empire have been lifted. From it as a living fountain have flowed those streams of religious emotion and moral incentive that

have made for permanent human happiness. To it have belonged all the heroes of faith—the glorious army of the martyrs—of whom their age was not worthy. Upon its illustrious roll the company of the apostles appears, and reaching through the Christian centuries, it includes the weakest of the disciples of the Master who in public discourse or private conversation has declared the love of God and the conditions of divine forgiveness. Like a sweeping flood tide it rises above the limits of creed, name, racial and doctrinal differences, and at high watermark reveals the true relation of the faith that unites in loving fellowship all who have been born anew and who joyously declare that experience to others.

This is a day of specialization. The preaching of the love of God and the announcing of the forgiveness of sins upon repentance is supposed to be the work of the ministry and the ministry alone. This is the most damaging heresy fostered by the church of to-day. It has stricken dumb the lips of millions of Christians, and in their silence they have felt no sense of shame.

Every saved man is called by his salvation to save others. To all who are the children of God, whatever their occupation, the words of the Master apply: "As the Father has sent me, even so send I you." The relation of service that exists between the Father and the Son exists between the Son and every one of his disciples from Andrew until now.

The restoration of the spirit and the method of Christ is the need of our times. The restoration of his method carries with it the preaching of the gospel in ordinary conversation. The laity is called to Christianize common conversation, making it the vehicle of the gospel of Christ.

To stimulate the consecration of conversation this little book is written. May they who engage in this study come to know the joy of the winner of souls.

R. W. W.

Baltimore, November 1, 1903.

INTRODUCTION

In the course of the centuries Christian work has passed through various phases, and it is now passing into a new phase, which is not new, but old.

In the apostolic and sub-apostolic age Christianity spread as news spreads. Without any defined missionary organization, the good news got itself told throughout the broad empire of Rome. And this in spite of an encompassing pagan atmosphere, and in spite of the terribly aggressive efforts of the empire to crush the movement. It was an era of personal witnessing; the gospel was in the common conversation of Christians.

In the centuries following, down to say the eighth, Christian enterprise was largely diverted from telling the good news to elaborating a statement of it, and enshrining it in a gorgeous ritual. Christianity became reflective, began to defend itself and invoked the aid of art. Its passion for souls was superseded by a passion for dialectics, and to keep alive a waning religious interest it was thought necessary to introduce more and more of the spectacular into the worship of the churches. This was the era of the great controversies and the great creeds. Christianity had conquered paganism, was now the religion of the empire, and there was no need for further personal witnessing. Official Christianity could be and would be maintained and extended by its appointed officials, and the layman contented himself with watching them do it from afar.

The creed building era was followed by the cathedral

building era. And naturally, for now that Christianity had been safely embalmed in the great creeds, and its doctrines put beyond the assaults of the infidel, and worship had become the contemplation of a spectacle, great buildings were the next step in the unfolding drama. These great buildings would be the repositories of Christianity, the homes of its official representatives and the scenes of the daily pageant of Christian worship. That was an unostentatious beginning when the mother of Constantine built the plain Church of the Manger in Bethlehem as a memorial of her son's conversion. And the churches of Ravenna of the sixth and seventh centuries are still plain on the outside; but already interior decoration has begun, and it will grow more and more elaborate to its culmination in St. Mark's in Venice, "the most superb piece of architectural coloring in the world." It is quite impossible to estimate the money and the energy and the devotion absorbed by the great cathedrals through a thousand years of Christian history. It is certain that with only an occasional outburst, like that of the Nestorians in the sixth century and that of the Franciscans in the thirteenth, there was no missionary enthusiasm for a thousand years.

Then came the Reformation, with its re-discovery of the gospel and of the individual to whom the gospel is addressed. And as the individual again, after a thousand years, aware of himself, must needs exercise his freedom, there followed more controversy, more creeds, new Confessions of Faith. And Protestants who had lost their bond of union by the rejection of the authority of the see of Rome, began to break up into the denominations and churches we are familiar with to-day.

A corollary of their movement the reformers did not see; or if they saw it they did not press it. *The emancipated individual must accept the trust of souls.* The Reforma-

tion put every man in possession of himself and made him directly accountable to God, but it forgot to charge him with his social mission. Not until our own day has it been generally perceived that the saved man must help to save some other man. Every one who has heard the good news must tell it to some one who has not heard it. Thus through nineteen centuries we have completed the great circle and come again to our starting-point in the age that gave us the New Testament, and we see again the words which incited the speedy conquest of the Roman Empire : "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you," "Let him that heareth say, Come" (John 20 : 21 ; Rev. 22 : 17).

On the mount of vision in the wilderness our Lord saw all the kingdoms of the world, and he knew that they were his (Matt. 4 : 1–11). How will he set about getting his claim recognized? Will he use his power to make bread of the stones to compel assent to his right to rule the nation? Will he go to Jerusalem, climb the great pile on Mt. Moriah, cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple and startle the people into an acknowledgment of his Messiahship by appearing to descend direct from heaven, and by a spectacular demonstration of God's care in preserving him from death in such an ordeal? Will he league himself with Satanic powers and win the world by compromise with its present ruler? Compromise is so much easier than conquest!

No, he will take neither of these suggested courses. He will go back to the Jordan Valley where John is baptizing. And when he reaches the place he does not announce himself, he does not preach a sermon, he begins his work by a private conversation with two young fishermen from the Sea of Galilee.

What a contrast is here. In the wilderness, "what expansion, what awful enlargement of view, out, out on every

side to the far horizon" of a world kingdom. All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them passed in majestical procession before his vision, and the voices of the psalmists and prophets of old had thrilled him with their unanimous pronouncement, "They are thine, they are thine." "I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2 : 8). Truly it was a day of great visions, but it was followed by a day of how small beginnings. How feeble, how obscure, how beneath a king is that conversation yonder with two young men.

Surely never before did one who knew himself to be so great and his mission in the world to be so momentous begin in so humble a way to do his work. He had chosen his method deliberately, and it began at once to be vindicated. For the next day these two young men rushed upon their friends with the announcement, "We have found the Messiah," and with trembling eagerness told over the things he had said and how they had not slept for the joy of the revelation. And now Peter and Philip and Nathanael come into the history, to be remembered in connection with it to the end of time. And John, who has given so large a part of his first chapter to the account of these incidents—so vividly remembered by him—will be occupied for the most part throughout his Gospel with accounts of our Lord's dealings with individuals and what immediately grew out of these interviews.

Run through the chapters and look into the faces of these men and women. Here they are : Nicodemus, a leading citizen (chapter 3) ; a fallen woman (chapter 4) ; a king's officer (chapter 4) ; a hospital cripple (chapter 5) ; a blind man (chapter 9) ; the sisters of a friend who died (chapter 11) ; a household group in Bethany (chapter 12) ; certain Greeks (chapter 12) ; the Twelve (chapters 13, 14, 15, 16,

17). Indeed, the last six months of his life were spent in comparative seclusion with the Twelve. In chapter 7 his unbelieving brothers, impatient for a big success, advise a different method : "Depart hence and go into Judea, that thy disciples may behold the works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly." But he declines their advice. "And when they were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret" (John 7 : 3–10).

If now we consider the method our Lord adopted we shall see in it his estimate of the individual. In an age which despised the individual Jesus discovered the single soul and fixed its value ; it was worth more than the grass, the birds, the planet, the universe of things. "The man who can say 'My Father' to the Being who rules heaven and earth, is thereby raised above heaven and earth and himself has a value which is higher than all the fabric of this world. . . . Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light, and what he did no one can any more undo" (Harnack, "What is Christianity?" pp. 72, 73).

Moreover, he knew that the only way for anything to spread through the living organism of humanity—whether a plague, an idea, or a gospel—is by vital communication, the contact of spirits. The vitalized unit must vitalize another. The fourth Gospel and all its influence in the world lay as possibility in that first interview between John and Jesus. The Epistle to the Romans and Augustine's theology and Spurgeon's sermons all lay as possibilities in that first word of his risen Lord to Saul of Tarsus, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." God was stretching out his hands to Ethiopia and all the Dark Continent when in the village of Blantyre, in Scotland, he spoke to the heart of a young weaver named David Livingstone.

Hence it is that there was no feebleness in our Lord's

method, no mismatching of his claims and his way of spending his time. It was precisely because he was what he claimed to be and because he knew the truth and because he knew man and God that he chose the method of the personal interview and relied so largely upon it. Truth can only be communicated through personality, and if we put this principle into a formula for world-wide Christian propagandism, it would read thus : *Each one win one.*

If any one begins to say this method is endless, overtaxes patience, and cannot possibly compass all the people in the world, let him note the results of the gospel in conversation in the life of our Lord and of the first Christians. To the men and women who were in his immediate presence and were the objects of his direct ministrations, Jesus gave his whole heart, but he knew that there behind them crowded up the world, coming to its light.

EDWIN M. POTEAT.

PHILADELPHIA.

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Any of the works mentioned can be procured through the publishers of this book.

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THE CHRISTIAN CONVERSATIONALIST

THE ORGANIZATION

THE basis of every organization is its constitution, written or unwritten. The constitution is an agreement reached by its framers. In all evangelical churches there are individual personal workers—the Christian conversationalists of to-day. The organization and the training of these for more efficient service is an increasingly urgent need. The consecration of common conversation to the ministry of the gospel is imperatively necessary to the rapid progress of modern Christianity. The specific object of this organization is to consecrate conversation to Christ.

The Master from among the many who believed in him selected the Twelve. Before making the selection, he spent the night in prayer. In selecting a group of personal workers, the pastor of to-day may wisely follow his Master's example. A small number of consecrated, tactful, and enthusiastic workers will accomplish greater results than a much larger body of average Christians. The selection of those who shall be invited to join the organization should be made by the pastor, and the greatest possible care should be taken by him in making the selection. Every one chosen for membership should have a holy ambition to become a winner of souls. The moral qualities demanded in those who undertake this work are as high as those de-

manded in the minister. Soul-winners must be worthy of all confidence. No one should be enrolled who is unwilling to do the work delegated to him ; *for personal workers are made by doing personal work.*

A pledge is necessary. The following is suggested : "I consecrate my lips to the service of my Master, and pledge myself daily to pray for my unsaved friends and each week to speak to at least one person regarding the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord." There are some reasons for postponing the taking of the pledge until the body is thoroughly organized and the members have had some practice in personal work.

The name of the organization should suggest its object and at the same time appeal to the religious imagination of the members. One successful circle of personal workers is called "The Apostles of the Pew." "Each One Win One Band" is popular. "The Christian Conversational Club" is a good alliterative name. "Witnesses for Christ" embodies the prominent thought of primitive Christianity. Many prefer the familiar phrase, "The Personal Worker's Circle."

The necessary officers are the Leader, or President, and the Secretary. The teaching of the class, the planning of the work from week to week, the directing of the personal work outside of the classroom are the principal duties of the leader. The secretary, in addition to the duties incidental to this office, should keep in a book, to which the members have access, the spiritual biographies of all those in whose salvation the circle is interested.

An attractive, well-ventilated room, free from interruption, must be secured. A regular programme is desirable. The following is suggested : Brief devotional service ; study of lesson, thirty minutes ; reports and conference on personal work, thirty minutes, closing with a season of earnest

prayer, in which those in whom the members are interested will be remembered by name.

The sessions are divided into two parts : the Study Hour and the Conference, the one dealing with the theory of personal work, and the other with the practice of personal work. The first corresponds to the recitation hour, and the second to the laboratory hour of the school. Every member should be delegated to do a certain amount of personal work each week. It is imperative that the reports of religious conversations held with the unsaved shall be succinctly and faithfully reported, and that these reports shall not be discussed—better not even mentioned—outside the membership of the circle.

The hour of organization may close with dedicatory prayers, every member participating, each one repeating on bended knee the chosen pledge.

THE
TRUE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

From Discipleship to Apostleship
The Spiritual Apostolate

I

THE STUDY HOUR—FROM DISCIPLESHIP TO APOSTLESHIP

INTRODUCTION: Periods of Life. (1) Plant life: The period of growth is followed by the period of fruit-bearing. (2) Mental life: The pupil becomes the teacher. (3) Christian life: The disciple becomes the apostle.

1. Becoming a Disciple. (1) The process as given in the New Testament (Matt. 4 : 18–22 ; 9 : 9 ; Mark 1 : 16–21 ; Luke 5 : 27–32 ; 19 : 1–9 ; John 1 : 35–51 ; 9 : 1–38 ; Acts 8 : 26–40 ; 10 : 1–48 ; 16 : 14, 15, 25–34). (2) The process in the present time: Religious experiences given by members present. (3) Points of similarity and dissimilarity.

2. The Period of Discipleship. (1) Its length. (2) The training of the disciples: *a.* The Twelve ; *b.* Paul ; *c.* Timothy ; *d.* The modern minister ; *e.* The apostle of the pew or the personal worker.

3. Becoming an Apostle. (1) The inner experience. Study closely Matt. 9 : 36 to 10 : 1 ; Acts 26 : 14–23. (2) A man with a message (Matt. 28 : 19, 20 ; Acts 1 : 8 ; 2 : 14–40 ; 3 : 12–26 ; 4 : 19, 20 ; 26 : 22, 23 ; Rom. 1 : 14–17). (3) Requirements in filling the apostolic office (Acts 1 : 21, 22 ; 1 Cor. 9 : 2). (4) Can these requirements be met to-day? What is meant by the spiritual apostolate? Apostolic succession? (5) The true spiritual apostolic succession.

THE CONFERENCE

Let each member present the names of two persons in whose salvation he is prayerfully interested. The spiritual biographies of these persons should be written out and placed

in the hands of the secretary. The biographies include age, temperament, parentage—Christian or non-Christian, relation to the church and the Bible-school, occupation and environment, a record of any conversations the one presenting the name has had upon the subject of personal religion, together with suggestions regarding the best means of approach in presenting Christ as a personal Saviour. These biographies should be read and discussed. The session closes with a season of prayer in which each one of the unconverted is remembered by name.

In delegating the work for the ensuing week, the leader is advised to outline the simplest and easiest personal work; invitations to attend church, conversations with invalids and aged Christians, heart to heart talks with intimate friends regarding the love of God and the gathering of the accounts of the conversions of friends and relatives.

The first problem in religious conversation is "the approach"—how to lead the discussion from the commonplace to the sublime, from the natural to the spiritual. The leader in delegating the work, should ask the members to give special attention to the methods they use in turning the conversation into religious channels. At the next meeting, every member should participate in the discussion: "How I approached the subject of personal religion."

II

THE STUDY HOUR—THE SPIRITUAL APOSTOLATE

"Jesus said unto them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."—John 20: 21.

1. The Founding of the Spiritual Apostolate. The evening of Resurrection Day; the meeting of the risen Christ and his apostles; the sending of them into the world as the Father had sent him.

2. The Foundation of the Spiritual Apostolate. A personal relation. A divine mission. An enduement with power. An eternal reward.

3. The Apostles of To-day : The two classes of apostles : (1) The ministry sent to preach the gospel. (2) The laity sent to teach the gospel by means of personal conversation. The laity as the apostles of to-day : *a.* Their equipment : A knowledge of Christ (2 Tim. 1 : 12 ; 1 Tim. 1 : 15 ; Phil. 3 : 8–11) ; a pure life (Matt. 5 : 13–16 ; 2 Tim. 2 : 19–21) ; a consecrated will (Acts 9 : 6 ; Luke 18 : 28–30) ; a love of souls (2 Cor. 5 : 14–20) ; a clear understanding of Bible teaching (2 Tim. 3 : 14–17) ; a profound consciousness of God through the presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1 : 8). *b.* Where they may labor : In gospel meetings, Bible schools, the home, on the street, at places of business and employment, and with people as they travel. *c.* The advantages of this method : It can be done anywhere, at any time and reaches all classes. Every month over a million sermons are preached in America. If each sermon produced the effect of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, the number of converts would equal twice the present population of the world. Most of the Master's time was spent in personal work. When his followers in name adopt his method, the world will soon be evangelized. Apostolic success will be the result of the emphasizing of the true, spiritual apostolic succession.

THE CONFERENCE

Each member will add the names of three persons in whom he is prayerfully interested. The spiritual biography of each should be placed in the hands of the secretary. At any succeeding meeting new names may be presented.

Reports of conversations with special reference to methods of approach. The critical moment in a religious conver-

sation is the approach. In no work is a good beginning so necessary. The various methods may be grouped as follows :

1. Through the Reason. Any subject followed to its logical conclusion leads to God and our relation to him. The "flower in the crannied wall" contains the mystery of God and man.

2. Through the Imagination. Nature, poetry, art, the hopes of youth, the heart-hungers of mankind, the vision of the future in which death appears, naturally suggest the solemnities of life. This is the easiest approach and the one most frequently used by the Master. Study how deftly he turns the conversation from nature to God ; his parables as methods of approach.

3. Through the Memory. Early experiences, the associations of friends, the memory of loved ones gone, afford to those long acquainted a most effective means of approach.

The secretary should keep a proper record of the conversations reported, so that all the members of the circle will be acquainted with the attitude of those in whom they are interested.

The arrangement of the week's work by the leader. A season of prayer.

THE GOSPEL IN CONVERSATION

Christ as a Conversationalist
The Consecration of Conversation

I

THE STUDY HOUR—CHRIST AS A CONVERSATIONALIST

CHRIST stands before us as the master of the fine art of spiritual conversation. The record of his personal interviews outnumbers his public addresses. A large part of the Gospels is devoted to his table talk (Matt. 9 : 10–17 ; Mark 2 : 15–22 ; Luke 5 : 29–39 ; 7 : 36–50 ; 10 : 38–42 ; 11 : 37–54 ; 14 : 1–24 ; John, chap. 13 to 16). In the recorded interviews he seeks to secure successively four mental states or attitudes : 1. Attention. 2. Receptivity. 3. A consciousness of need. 4. The acceptance of himself and his message as a complete satisfaction for this need. Study in illustration his conversation with the woman of Samaria. He is not always successful in creating these mental states, but he never loses control and with wonderful wisdom guides the conversation as he wills. In his controversial encounters he easily puts his opponents to utter confusion. Rulers, Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and lawyers confess defeat (Matt. 22 : 15 to 23 : 39 ; Mark 12 : 13–40). "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." Tact, boldness, trenchancy mark his conversations with the morally self-satisfied and the intellectually dull (Luke 14 : 1–24 ; John 3 : 1–24). In the presence of inordinate prejudice and moral indifference, he resolutely holds his peace. So long as he can lead the conversation toward a clearer understanding of the truth he continues it. When the mind of the other refuses to be led, the conversation ends. Jesus dominated every interview. He never talked to be talking. He spoke with purpose.

Christ's method was determined (1) by the character and the intellectual equipment of the person with whom he was conversing ; (2) by the purpose to be attained through the conversation. In illustration, study the interview given in the Gospel of John with a skeptical ruler (John 3 · 1–24).

THE CONVERSATION WITH NICODEMUS

1. Nicodemus ; a man of honorable position, unblemished character, thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures. His intellectual interest has been awakened by the words and the miracles of Jesus. An honest skeptic, he invites argument ; a rationalist, he seeks an explanation rather than a personal appropriation of truth.

2. Jesus seeks to secure successively the mental attitudes of attention, receptivity, consciousness of need, and the acceptance of himself as a satisfaction for this need ; in part he succeeds. The attention of Nicodemus is secured. He is unwilling to receive the utterances of Jesus without reasonable proof: "How can these things be?" "How?" is the question of the rationalist. Nicodemus had a little faith in Jesus, based upon the miracles he performed. The purpose of Jesus was to convince him of the littleness of his faith and to evoke more faith. If a man is a rationalist with some faith, *demand more faith.*

Study the methods of the Master in dealing with a prejudiced and sinful woman (John 4 : 1–42) ; an educated and moral young man (Matt. 19 : 16–22 ; Mark 10 : 17–22 ; Luke 18 : 18–24) ; a rich but despised publican (Luke 19 : 1–10) ; a modest man of faith (Matt. 8: 5–13 ; Luke 7 : 1–10) ; a vacillating man of the world (Matt., chap. 27 ; Mark, chap. 15 ; Luke, chap. 23) ; a penitent disciple (John 21 : 15–23).

Notice his alertness and his intellectual superiority ; the skill with which he guides the conversation ; the ease with

which he dismisses the theological discussion ; his appeal to the conscience ; his tact in pointing out sin ; the emphasis he places upon personal religion. Point out other characteristics. The object of Christ in every conversation was to bring the one with whom he was conversing into right relation with God. This is the object the Christian conversationalist seeks in every religious conversation.

THE CONFERENCE

The personal worker is expected to guide the conversation toward the subject of personal religion ; meet all attempts to evade the subject ; answer the objections that may be urged and in the end force the issue, the acceptance or the rejection of Jesus as a personal Saviour.

Reports upon the week's work. Further discussion of methods of approach. The problem of the personal worker to-day is not how to deal with the man who is seeking a Saviour, but with the one whose interest is not sufficient to introduce the subject of religion, and who after its introduction seeks to evade it. How can you secure his interested attention ? What place has letter-writing in personal work ?

In arranging for the week's work, the leader shall urge the introduction of personal religion into letter-writing. Each member is requested to prepare a letter to an unsaved friend, in which an appeal will be made to accept Christ. These letters to be presented at the next conference for discussion.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—THE CONSECRATION OF CONVERSATION

Religious conversation is declining. More preaching, more teaching, more church work, and less communing one

with another. The religious life, once exuberant and expressive, is to-day marked by reserve, not to say timidity. People speak naturally upon whatever is uppermost in their minds. Religious conversations characterize revival periods. There is, therefore, to-day a lack of serious and original thought regarding religion.

There are three factors in conversation : material, desire, opportunity. There must be the thought to be expressed, the desire to give expression to the thought, and the opportunity for this expression. The chief hindrances to religious conversation are found in the lack of material for such conversation and the absence of desire to give expression to whatever thought exists.

How are these hindrances to be overcome ? By gathering such an abundance of material that thoughts upon religion will become uppermost in the mind.

Three modes of gathering material : Study, Meditation, Prayer. Special study of the Bible. (1) With a concordance—the study of topics. (2) Each book singly with special reference to the historical background, the personality of the writer, and the purpose of the book. (3) By reading a certain portion of the Scripture each day. (4) By devotional study of the word. (5) By memorizing the choicest portions of the Scripture. This reverent study will deepen one's consciousness of God. Meditation is neither study nor reverie, it is "the steadfast setting of the mind on things unseen and eternal, on God and the soul, on the authority and the dictates of the moral law, on life, not as it is broken in the kaleidoscope of experience, but as it is apprehended in the white light of its idea." It is seeing Him who is invisible ; it is practising the presence of God. Prayer is the most arduous of intellectual labors. Smooth petitions, unmixed with emotions, represent no greater toil than the rasping tones of the phonograph. True prayer is

the setting forth of one's relation to God and realizing this relation anew in ways deeper and more far-reaching. The supreme blessing in prayer is getting God's point of view of one's relations, needs, and task, and with this view the inspiration to realize his will. Cultivate the divine perspective. See life as God sees it. In the light of this revelation one comes to know those things for which he ought to pray.

He who with earnestness and faithfulness studies, meditates, and prays will find his mind enriched with abundant material for religious conversation and with this enrichment will come the desire to speak. The opportunity to speak is ever at hand.

The message of the Christian conversationalist is the reality of the spiritual world; the only entrance into the kingdom of God—the new birth, the way of entrance—trust in Jesus Christ.

In Christianizing our conversations with the unsaved, the following suggestions are courteously offered:

Use all your powers to gain the kindly feeling of those in whom you are interested. Ordinary kindness may be the best means of gaining their thoughtful attention. The first problem in personal work is getting the close attention of the one to whom you speak.

Realize that you speak in Christ's stead. Be natural. Avoid cant and all technical religious terms. Conduct the conversation as nearly as possible as Christ would do. Seek to understand thoroughly the person you address: his temperament, his past, the present influences in his life, his point of view of religion—what he believes rather than what he does not believe; his difficulty. Meet this difficulty as it exists in his mind. Consider it from his point of view. Be accurate in your diagnosis before you seek to apply the remedy. Avoid controversy and all subjects that lie outside of the presentation of Christ. Find a common basis of be-

lief and from this lead up to the presentation of Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. Rely upon the Spirit of God and the word of God. Be wise in the use of Scriptures. Sometimes one verse is all you need to quote.

Engage in earnest prayer and if possible persuade him to pray aloud for himself. Be dead in earnest. Do not do all the talking. Religious gabbling is not personal work. Press the one you are leading to Christ to an immediate decision. If he declines, go to your closet in prayer; study the causes of your failure. Prepare yourself for another interview. Never give up the man. Become an apostle to him as Paul was to the Gentiles.

If he accepts Christ give him definite instructions how to succeed in the Christian life. Urge him to obey at the earliest possible moment the command of Christ to profess his faith in baptism. Explain the meaning and purpose of baptism. Show him that it is a declaration of his experience in a symbol more eloquent than words.

THE CONFERENCE

The following questions may be discussed; answers to be given from personal experiences.

1. How to create opportunities for religious conversations?
2. How to direct the drift of conversation toward religion?
3. How to open up the subject of personal religion?

The discussion of the letters presented by the members in accordance with the arrangements of the previous meeting; reports of the week; delegating new work; earnest prayer for the unsaved.

CONVERSION

The Fact of Conversion
The Psychology of Conversion

I

THE STUDY HOUR—THE FACT OF CONVERSION

IN the study of a converted person, one observes first a changed will expressing itself in nobler and more God-like life. Not only the will is changed but also the disposition. Holy love is awakened in the soul. The converted man knows that a radical change has taken place in his subconsciousness. He possesses new interests, new relations, new affections, new incentives to holiness, new purposes, and new hopes. He is a new creation.

In seeking an explanation for this transformation, he finds truth to have been a cause. The truth regarding the sinfulness of sin entered the arena of his mind and conquered, and he realized more vividly than ever before that he was a lost sinner. The realization of sin does not lead necessarily to a turning from sin. Yet it is a prerequisite of repentance. Knowledge of the truth is not then the ultimate cause of conversion. The realization of sinfulness was followed by a loathing of sin, a mighty desire to renounce sin that stirred his personality to its depths. A Power not himself was at work within him. The changed relation to sin was not the product of either his volition or the realization of a terrifying fact. The unseen Worker was God the Holy Spirit. The perception of the truth of the gospel was followed under the inspiration of the unseen Worker by a loving trust in Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. He then realized that his sins were forgiven and that he was child of God.

The successive states are variously described. The re-

alization of sin is called conviction of sin. The ministers of earlier days devoted much time in revival services to the preaching of sin. Their course was logical and wise. The turning from sin is called repentance. The turning to Christ in loving trust is called faith. The two, repentance and faith are considered as one ; for there is but one action in turning from sin to Christ as Saviour from sin. To this is given the name conversion. The process which no one can explain, that begins with repentance, if not earlier, and ends with the knowledge of sin forgiven, is called regeneration, and is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture References

1. Regeneration: John 1 : 12, 13, 16 ; 3 : 3–8 ; 6 : 44–47, 50, 51 ; John 10 : 10 ; Rom. 6 : 3–23 ; 8 : 2–16 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 17 ; Eph. 2 : 5–8 ; 1 Peter 2 : 9 ; 2 Peter 1 : 3, 4.

2. Conviction of Sin : Gen. 4 : 13 ; Luke 5 : 8 ; Acts 2 : 37 ; 9 : 6 ; 16 : 29 ; John 8 : 34 ; 1 John 3 : 4, 5 ; James 1 : 14, 15 ; 1 John 5 : 17 ; Rom. 3 : 23 ; 6 : 23.

3. Repentance : Luke 18 : 10–14 ; 15 : 17–21 ; Matt. 9 : 12, 13 ; 2 Cor. 7 : 10 ; Ezek. 18 : 30–32 ; Ps. 51 : 1–17.

4. Faith : John 3 : 16–36 ; 5 : 24 ; Acts 13 : 39 ; Rom. 10 : 9, 10 ; Acts 10 : 43 ; 16 : 31.

5. Forgiveness of Sin : Matt. 1 : 21 ; Luke 24 : 47 ; Acts 13 : 38, 39 ; 26 : 16–18 ; Col. 2 : 13 ; 1 John 1 : 9.

CONFERENCE

This conference is an old-fashioned experience meeting. The written accounts of their conversions the members will hand to the leader for study and comparison. Each one is expected to tell succinctly and feelingly of the beginning of his Christian life. "Who brought me to Christ?" is the theme of each testimony.

After the reports of the week's work, and the delegating

of the work for the coming week, the closing moments may be spent in thanksgiving to God for redemption from sin.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONVERSION

1. The Science of Psychology. (1) Its relation to religious experiences. Recent investigations of the fact of conversion: Starbuck's "Psychology of Religion," Coe's "Spiritual Life," James' "Varieties of Religious Experiences," Leuba's "Psychology of Religious Phenomena." (2) The rise of the so-called new thought: The apostles of Emerson, Dresser, Trine, Hubbard; Mind Cures, Christian Science, Dowieism. The relation of these recent movements to conversion.

2. What is Conversion? (1) The biblical accounts of conversion: Nathanael (John 1 : 45–51); the man born blind (John 9 : 1–39); the lost son (Luke 15 : 11–24); the converts of Pentecost (Acts 2 : 37–41); Paul (Acts 9 : 3–19; 22 : 6–16; 26 : 12–19); Cornelius (Acts 10 : 34–45); the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8 : 27–40); Lydia (Acts 16 : 14, 15); the jailer of Philippi (Acts 16 : 25–34). Points of dissimilarity in education, temperament, mental grasp, spiritual apprehension, previous life; in the way the gospel was presented and in the effects produced. Points of similarity: A new presentation of Jesus Christ; a new recognition of his claims and his trustworthiness; a new relation to him through loving trust, producing a complete readjustment of the subconscious life and manifesting this transformation in the field of consciousness through intellect, affection, and will; the intellect recognizing God in Christ as the divine Teacher, the heart recognizing him as the object of supreme affection, and the will, wholly surrendered, find-

ing its expression in obedience ; the permanent, persistent effort to reproduce Christlike conduct. (2) Accounts of modern conversions : C. G. Finney, Elder Jacob Knapp, S. H. Hadley, Colonel Gardiner, Adolph Monod, Tolstoy, Henry Ward Beecher. Identity of points of dissimilarity and similarity in modern conversions when compared with the biblical conversions.

3. The Psychological Study of Conversion. (1) Its value. There are spiritual laws in the spiritual world. Psychology, through a study of the phenomena of conversion, seeks to discover these spiritual laws. A knowledge of these laws is needed by the Christian conversationalist that he may be furnished for every good work. (2) When does conversion occur? *a.* Time : In the period of adolescence conversions are most frequent. The various explanations of the numerous religious awakenings between the ages of eleven and thirteen ; between the ages of fifteen and seventeen. *b.* Conditions : The presentation of Christ. The consciousness of need. The period of stress. The surrender of the whole being to Christ. (3) What human forces contribute to conversion? *a.* Human speech has been most highly honored. Preaching has not been so effective as private conversation. Present spiritual decline due to decline in religious conversation. The imperative need of its restoration *b.* The silent influence of Christlike conduct.

THE CONFERENCE

Each member is requested to interview some well-known Christian and secure from him an account of his conversion. It is desirable that these experiences shall be widely distributed. Friends outside the city may be written to and their answers secured in time for this meeting. To aid in securing facts of value, the following questions are given :

1. What religious influences entered into your early life?

Was the Bible regularly read by your parents? Did they conduct family worship? Did you attend the Bible-school?

2. When and under what circumstances did the first deep impression come upon you that you ought to be a Christian? Describe your feelings at this time. How long after was your conversion?

3. What were the human influences that led to your conversion? Did the conversion occur in a revival? Was your conversion instantaneous or did it cover a period of time, or does it lie beyond your recollection?

4. Describe as accurately as possible your feelings at the time of conversion. Looking back over your life, what effects do you see produced by it?

The conference period should be devoted to the reading of the above reports. Members will mark those elements of experience that belong to them all and those that are unusual and incidental.

Reports of conversations and the arranging for interviews. A season of prayer.

THE DRAMA OF THE SOUL

I

THE STUDY HOUR—THE DRAMA OF THE SOUL

THE theatre is one of the great forces to-day that create public opinion and influence individual conduct. While seeking merely to amuse, it plays no small part in determining the point of view that its attendants take of life and human destiny. The theatre of to-day encourages worldliness, frivolity, and disgraceful selfishness, while many plays are vicious and diabolical. Yet the theatre possesses a fascination recognized and felt by the followers of Christ. The source of its bewitching power is the universal interest in human struggle. The theatre gives us human action, compressing the story of years into hours of presentation.

The play, the novel, the romance, the dramatic poem is epitomized in the plot, which presents persons of different tendencies, temperaments, and characters, who, under succeeding and usually exciting situations, reveal varied human emotions and motives, all tending to a climax in which the relations of some of these persons are definitely determined. There are five movements in the plot : The presentation of the characters, the heightening of the interest, the crisis, the moment of suspense, the *dénouement* or catastrophe.

Religion is a personal relationship existing between God and man. Jesus Christ is the maker of this relation. The greatest of all dramas is the drama of the soul. The entrance of Jesus into the mind of man is the opening act of this drama ; his acceptance and his permanent, abiding presence, or his rejection and permanent withdrawal, is its

closing act. The coming of Christ into a life leads inevitably to the crisis of a decision. No one in a Christian land can escape that crisis when the whole being of the man considers the question, "What then shall I do with Jesus, called the Christ?" It is life's most dramatic moment. The period of indecision, the moment of suspense, may cover a brief or an extended time, but soon or late it is followed by the acceptance or the final rejection of Jesus Christ. The soul then is definitely saved or definitely damned.

In the presentation of Jesus Christ to the man without God, his followers, the spiritual apostles in every age, play a most important part. To be participants in the dramas of the soul you are called. A close study of the dramas of the soul which are given in the New Testament reveals five acts or movements. We shall study these, giving special attention to the type of the person approached, the circumstances under which Christ was presented, the method used, the effects as seen in the successive movements, and the final outcome. In the study of similar modern types the biblical precedent in method will be followed, and the Scriptures that will instruct the type of soul with which we deal will be given.

The outline for each of these studies is as follows: (1) The presentation of the characters. (2) The heightening of the interest. (3) The crisis. (4) The moment of suspense. (5) The outcome.

The parable of the Lost Son furnishes an excellent illustration of these five movements, which appear in every complete story. This has been called, "Christ's portrayal of the process of conversion."

1. The Presentation of the Characters. "And a certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me, and he divided unto them his living."

2. The Heightening of the Interest. "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him."

3. The Crisis. "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

4. The Moment of Suspense. "And he arose, and came to his father."

5. The Outcome. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

THE CONFERENCE

The leader should take this hour for the study and the analysis of the religious experiences that the members have furnished him.

Reports of personal work and the arranging for interviews. A season of prayer.

THE INQUIRING

The Quest for God
The Inquirers at Pentecost
The Ethiopian Treasurer
The Blind Beggar
One Who Was a Sinner

I

THE STUDY HOUR—THE QUEST FOR GOD

"PHILIP saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?"

The three ways of approach to God: 1. Through the intellect, resulting in a consciousness of God; 2. Through the affections, producing confidence in God; 3. Through the will, leading to communion with God in conduct and life. This trinity of relationships is experienced by every child of God. The Christian knows, trusts, and obeys God. The demand of Philip, "Show us the Father," expresses the universal quest for God. In the reply of Jesus there are two statements: 1. Philip has had the companionship of Christ; and 2. This companionship has been a revelation of the Father. The three thoughts that here appear are: 1. The Quest for God; 2. The Companionship of Christ; 3. The Unveiling of the Father.

1. The Quest for God. Two nations have led the world in the search for God: the Hebrew and the Greek. The one sought God through the perception of the senses, and the other through the processes of the reason. The one demanded authority; the other, sweet reasonableness. The one expected the power of God to be manifested in every revelation of himself; the other expected the revelation to show forth the wisdom of the Infinite Mind. The literary product of one was law; the literary product of the other

was philosophy. The one was the seeker after the sign; the other was the seeker after wisdom. Philip expressed in his inquiry the demand of both the Hebrew and the Greek. He was a Hebrew. He had the Hebrew face, the Hebrew's religious zeal, and the Hebrew's Messianic hope. He was reared, however, in a little city dominated by Greek influences. He spoke fluently the Greek language. The expressions of his thought as given in the Gospel of John are Grecian in character, seeking the reason of things. As a Hebrew he naturally expected a new and awful theophany; as influenced by the Greek spirit he expected a new and vivid expression of the Infinite Mind.

2. The Companionship of Christ. Philip was first a disciple, and afterward was chosen to be an apostle of Jesus. He was one of the very first of that company of young men who gathered about the Carpenter of Nazareth. For months, perhaps years, he had been intimately associated with the Master. He had seen him still the tempest, multiply bread, heal the sick, restore the blind, and raise the dead. Every day he had beheld the supernatural power of the Christ. He also had heard him speak as never man had spoken; he discovered in his thought a sweet reasonableness, a profundity, a spiritual consciousness and insight that far surpassed the utterances of the Hebrew prophets whose writings he had read. Indeed, it seemed to Philip that Jesus had kept back but one phase of revelation—the Father himself. A vision of the Father would satisfy every demand he could make: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."

3. The Unveiling of the Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," is the most precious, the most luminous, the most constructive, and most iconoclastic sentence in human speech. In Jesus is found the God for whom the nations have searched. The discovery of God is the India of the soul's voyage. Jesus reveals God as

near to us, so like us that we may whisper, "Our Father," and he hears ; so loving that he expressed himself in terms of the finite, in forms of the human, giving all, even life itself, to make this expression complete. Upon this utterance Christianity is founded. The gospel is the declaration of those who have seen Jesus by faith that in him they beheld the Father. The vision of the Father in Christ is the spiritual ordination of the Christian minister. This sentence is also the sentence unto condemnation of all rites and forms except as they are the expressions of inner experiences. It places man in the presence of the Christ, and declares : "Believe in him and thou shalt be saved ; believe not, and all the baptisms and the liturgies, all the prayers and the priests from Constantine to the day of judgment cannot save you from perishing."

"Man is incurably religious." The demand for a religion is wrought into the very structure of the human mind. Every man is approachable upon the subject of personal religion. Wise is he who knows the ways of approach.

To us is committed the ministry of reconciliation. The Christian's message : "The God whom you instinctively seek was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Will you be reconciled to God ? In Christ's stead I plead. His love has brought me to you. May I conduct you to him ?" The quest for God is human ; to aid humanity in this quest is divine. We are workers together with God. We too, have come to seek and to save the lost.

THE CONFERENCE

Each member will present proof that man is incurably religious. These proofs should be gathered from the personal observations of the members or their friends. Striking incidents from Christian biographies will be of value. Do men ever lose all interest in the quest for God ? When

this interest is latent, how can it be quickened? Study the Scriptures that describe the work of the Holy Spirit in man's religious awakening (John 16 : 8–11 ; Heb. 3 : 7, 8 ; John 3 : 5–8 ; 6 : 63 ; Titus 3 : 5, etc.). Give illustrations of the work of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the efforts of God's servants.

Reports of personal work with special reference to the religious attitudes of those interviewed. The diagnosis of their spiritual diseases with discussion of the best modes of treatment. Additions to the list of the unsaved. Prayer for the Spirit's guidance.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—THE INQUIRERS AT PENTECOST

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : Jerusalem crowded with devout visitors attending the feast of Pentecost. (2) Characters : The apostles, their fellow-disciples, and the multitude. (3) The apostles speaking in the different languages represented in the multitude. Peter's defense and interpretation of Joel 2 : 28, 29 (Acts 2 : 14–21).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) Peter's theme : Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2 : 22–24). (2) The resurrection of Christ foretold in prophecy (Acts 2 : 25–31). (3) The risen Christ seen by his disciples (Acts 2 : 32). (4) Presence of the Holy Spirit in the apostles, proof of Christ's exaltation (Acts 2 : 33). (5) His exaltation foretold by David (Acts 2 : 34, 35). (6) Jesus is both Lord and Christ (Acts 2 : 36).

3. The Crisis. (1) The effect of the sermon, many crying, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (2) Peter's reply : "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

4. The Moment of Suspense. The first inquiry meeting : The apostles and probably other disciples engaging in personal work. "How to be saved," was the question they were called to answer.

5. The Outcome. About three thousand were converted and baptized.

THE INQUIRERS OF TO-DAY

1. (1) Scene : A modern church. (2) Characters : A preacher of the gospel, a congregation of Christians and the unconverted.

2. (1) The congregation assembled for worship. (2) The evangelistic sermon closes with an earnest appeal to accept Christ. An invitation is extended to the unsaved to attend the inquiry meeting.

3. In the inquiry room, numbers of the unsaved by their presence asking, "How to be saved?" Personal workers urging the acceptance of Christ. Scriptures that will instruct the inquirer : Jesus, the sin-bearer—John 1 : 29 ; Isa. 53 : 6 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 21 ; Gal. 3 : 13 ; Matt. 1 : 21 ; Acts 3 : 36 ; Rom. 5 : 8–11 ; 1 Peter 1 : 18–20 ; Jesus delivers from the power of sin—Jude 24 ; 1 Peter 1 : 5 ; John 10 : 28 ; 2 Peter 1 : 4 ; Gal. 1 : 4. How Jesus is accepted—John 1 : 12 ; 3 : 16 ; Acts 10 : 43 ; confession demanded—Matt. 10 : 32 ; Rom. 10 : 9, 10 ; 1 John 4 : 15.

4. After a clear explanation of the Scripture teaching regarding the way of salvation, it is often advisable to leave the one you are leading to Christ alone with his thoughts while you engage in silent prayer for him. You have brought him to Christ, and that is all you can do. The closing scene leaves the soul with God.

5. Some believe.

THE CONFERENCE

This conference deals with the ways of approach, the methods of treatment, and the means in securing an immediate acceptance of Christ on the part of sincere inquirers.

1. Ways of approach. Under no condition does the personal worker find it easier to approach the subject of religion than in the inquiry room. The presence of the unconverted is an unvoiced request to be shown the way of salvation. Yet a situation so simple calls for tact and courtesy. Some are drawn by curiosity. A zealous but tactless worker may drive such a person away never to return. Where strong emotion is evinced, the worker may at once seek the difficulties that lie in the way of the acceptance of Christ. When the face and manner do not reveal a deep interest, a polite request to speak of Christ is advisable. "May I speak to you regarding your relation to Jesus Christ?" leads directly to the diagnosis of his case. "In this room there is but one topic of conversation : Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Shall we make that the subject of our conversation?" gives the unsaved an opportunity to accept or reject your suggestion. If he declines, do not tease or irritate him by continuing the conversation against his wishes. Be courteous.

2. Methods of treatment. In the inquiry room one meets with every type of character and every kind of difficulty that hinders the acceptance of Christ. These difficulties and how to meet them will be treated in the successive conferences. No soldier should go into battle without his weapons ; no personal worker into the inquiry room without his Bible. He needs to be dexterous in the use of the sword of the Spirit.

The inquiry of the inquirer is, "What shall I do to be saved?" The answer : Acts 16 : 31 ; John 3 : 16 ; Acts 4 : 12 ; John 6 : 28, 29 ; Acts 20 : 21 ; John 3 : 36 : Rom. 10 : 9, 10 ; Acts 10 : 43. Select other Scriptures.

3. Means in securing an immediate acceptance of Christ. Answer all pertinent questions, overcome as far as possible all real difficulties, meet all endeavors to change the subject courteously, *clear the field of every issue save one:* "Will you accept Christ as your personal Saviour?" Accomplish this by the intelligent use of Scripture. For every phase of religious conversation there is the fitting biblical quotation. Show him the present to be the only time of salvation; show him a postponement of acceptance is a present rejection; show him the dangers of delay; show him the blessedness, the joy through immediate acceptance.

Members in making reports for this week should group together all conversations with sincere inquirers, giving succinctly the methods of treatment and the means used in securing the acceptance of Christ. Ere this meeting, it is hoped that some of the members have come to know the joy of the winner of souls.

The delegating of the week's work. The renewal of the personal workers' vows. A season of prayer.

III

THE STUDY HOUR—THE ETHIOPIAN TREASURER

Acts 8 : 26–39.

1. The Presentation of the Characters (Acts 8 : 26–30). (1) Scene: The road through the desert; the coming of the chariot; the traveler on foot. (2) Characters: The treasurer of Ethiopia; the charioteer; Philip, a deacon of the church at Jerusalem, who had fled to Samaria upon the martyrdom of Stephen, a fellow-deacon. (3) The treasurer engaged in reading aloud Isaiah; Philip running along by the chariot, hears the words, "He was led as a sheep to

the slaughter." Philip breaks in upon the reader: "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

2. The Heightening of the Interest (Acts 8 : 31–35). (1) Philip, by invitation, throws light upon Isaiah 53 : 6, 7. (2) From this text Philip preached unto him Jesus. The sermon on Jesus included an explanation of salvation and baptism.

3. The Crisis (Acts 8 : 36). The treasurer: "What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

4. The Moment of Suspense (Acts 8 : 37). (1) Philip: "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." (2) The Treasurer: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

5. The Outcome (Acts 8 : 38–40). (1) The treasurer is baptized. (2) His work done, the Spirit caught away Philip. (3) The treasurer, rejoicing, went his way.

THE MODERN ETHIOPIAN TREASURER

1. Scene: Wherever those who journey are thrown together. (1) The opportunities given Christians to-day on trains, steamships, street cars, and elsewhere to preach Jesus. After the Bible-school, the teacher will find walking home with his pupil an admirable opportunity to turn a reference to the lesson of the day into an earnest discussion of personal religion. (2) Characters: A Christian conversationalist and a thoughtful companion. (3) Begin the conversation with any subject in which you find your companion interested.

2. Thoughtful companions are always receptive to new truth. Any thought he expresses, by tactful discussion will lead to the source of all truth. Acknowledge the limits of human knowledge. Emphasize the need of our securing all the light that can be thrown upon the great problems of life.

The presentation of Jesus as the explanation of all things: The Old Testament, with special reference to prophecy (Isa. 52 : 13 to 53 : 12); the relations of God and man (2 Cor. 5 : 18, 19); the Saviour from sin (1 Tim. 4 : 10); the divine purpose (Rom. 8 : 19, 20); immortality (2 Tim. 1 : 10); the creator of all things (John 1 : 14).

Jesus as the most powerful personality in the world to-day; the influence of his spirit upon men and institutions; the benefits that grow out of his influence; as man's moral ideal; the blessedness and inspiration that comes from his service.

A personal testimony heart-felt by the Christian: "What Jesus has done for me." Confirm John 1 : 12.

3. "What will you do with Jesus?" Ask for an immediate acceptance of Christ. If his intellect has been convinced by arguments, the affections may yet be unmoved. The most eloquent tributes to Christ have come from men who refused him their love. Thoughtful persons restrain their emotions. They prefer to be alone in the soul's crisis. If you fail to secure an immediate acceptance of Christ, secure from him a promise to pray alone and aloud. This prayer will reveal to him the sinfulness of his heart; for while his reason is convinced, his emotional nature rises in riotous rebellion at the thought of surrendering himself to Christ. This will reveal himself to himself.

4. In this moment, the thoughtful mind contemplates Christ and himself from a new point of view, and he profoundly feels that their personal relations must be definitely determined. This period frequently covers days and weeks, and is often accompanied by an intense conviction of sin amounting almost to despair. Study the conversions of Finney, Knapp, Brown, and others. The Spirit of God and the man strive mightily.

5. God grant that, like the desert traveler, he may go on his way rejoicing in the new-found Saviour.

THE CONFERENCE

"The Problem of the Traveler" is the subject of this conference. The modern spends increasing time in travel. The tickets of the various transportation companies of the world each year run into thousands of millions. The passenger traffic of London every six months equals the world's population. How to reach the moving masses is the modern problem. Various and some very ingenious methods have been tried. Tracts, "Silent Evangelism," Scripture texts hung in conspicuous places are methods more or less successful. Church advertising is increasing. These appeals to the eye of the traveler are not sufficient. The Ethiopian treasurer might have read the Messianic prophecies all the way from Jerusalem to Ethiopia and not learned of Jesus. Christian travelers consecrating their conversations as they travel, is the solution of the problem. Christian travelers therefore are under obligations to make themselves agreeable to their chance companions; for little courtesies, simple kindnesses create opportunities for religious conversation. Nowhere is courage and tact of the highest order more needed in presenting Christ; and nowhere outside of the inquiry room are the results of personal work more productive.

The members of the Circle will give their experiences in doing personal work on trains, steamers, in hotels, and elsewhere. If any member has had no such experiences, he will present the experiences of some devoted Christian like John Vassar or D. L. Moody. After this the Circle will discuss the question: "When is it the duty of the Christian to introduce the subject of religion to his traveling companion?"

The difficulty of the Ethiopian treasurer was a lack of knowledge. He was a sincere inquirer needing further light. Those to-day who belong to this type often present

this as a difficulty: "I do not clearly understand what or how I am to believe" (Gal. 3 : 13; 1 John 4 : 15; 2 : 2; Eph. 1 : 7; John 3 : 36; Rom. 10 : 8–10; John 3 : 14–16; Heb. 11 : 1; Rev. 22 : 17; 2 Tim. 1 : 12).

Reports of work done, discussions of situations met, delegating of work for following week, a season of prayer.

IV

THE STUDY HOUR—THE BLIND BEGGAR

John 9 : 1–38.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene: Jerusalem, A. D. 28. (2) Characters: Jesus and his disciples, a young blind beggar, his parents, the Pharisees, and citizens of Jerusalem. (3) The disciples question Jesus regarding the cause of the young beggar's blindness. His reply. The anointing and the command to wash in Siloam (John 9 : 1–7).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The young beggar returns from Siloam seeing. The astonishment of his neighbors. Their examination and the young man's explanation (John 9 : 7–12). (2) The examination by the Pharisees. The testimony of the young man. The cowardly attitude of his parents. The loyalty of the young man to the truth as far as he apprehended it (John 9 : 13–33). (3) His expulsion from the synagogue (John 9 : 34).

3. The Crisis. The interview between Jesus and the young man, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (John 9 : 35.)

4. The Moment of Suspense. "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Christ reveals himself (John 9 : 36, 37).

5. The Outcome. "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him (John 9 : 38).

THE MODERN BLIND BEGGAR

1. (1) Scene : The gathering of a group of Christians engaged in religious discussion. (2) Characters : A Christian conversationalist with his Christian friends, and one spiritually blind. (3) A discussion arises in the group of Christians regarding the causes of the spiritual blindness. Is this blindness caused by heredity—total depravity ; by education—erroneous conceptions of life and of God ; or by unbelief—a personal unwillingness to accept the truth. A reference is made to one who is seemingly blind to the realities of Christian faith. The Christian conversationalist makes the point that their duty is not to explain the spiritual blindness, but to give to him spiritual sight and by so doing to glorify God.

2. A conversation between the Christian conversationalist and the one spiritually blind :

"Do you see anything in religion that appeals to you?" asks the Christian conversationalist. "No, I do not," is the answer. "I haven't what you call the religious feeling. I am sincere. The impressions of my childhood have passed and religion makes no appeal to me now whatever."

The Christian conversationalist replies, "I am glad to hear you say that you are sincere. That means that you are ready to make profession so far as you have the experiences to profess. What profession can you make now? Do you believe that there is an eternal difference between right and wrong?"

"I have doubted," replies the one spiritually blind, "nearly everything, but I have never doubted that right is ever better than wrong."

"Why do you think that there is a difference between right and wrong?" asks the Christian conversationalist.

"I am convinced not so much by argument as by the fact that something within me tells me that it is true."

"You believe, then, in the moral law. Can there be a law without a lawmaker?" asks the Christian.

"I do not know regarding that. I only know that I have an abiding conviction that there is a moral government."

"Well, what is your relation to the law? Have you always kept it?"

"No, I have not. No man ever keeps this law."

"That is true," replied the Christian. "But what difference does it make if there is no one to enforce the law? Can you call it a law if it is violated by every man and there is no one to punish the violations?"

"But," replies the one spiritually blind, "so many suffer for these violations that there does seem to be punishment. Wrong-doing makes me unhappy."

"Then," says the Christian, "does it not follow, that you have reason to believe that there is One who punishes evil and rewards good? Will you not make this the ground of a belief that there is a God?"

"Yes," replies the one spiritually blind, "I do believe that there is a God."

3. "Now what are your relations to God?" asks the Christian. "He is the lawgiver, the law-enforcer. You recognize your relation to him as the authority that is over you; but have you no other relation? God has revealed himself to you, not only in the moral law, in nature, in the Bible, but also in his Son. You believe that nature is ordered by intelligence; you believe that there is no book that ranks in its moral value with the Bible. What do you think of Jesus?"

"He was the greatest teacher who ever lived," replies the one spiritually blind.

"Are you willing to profess that anywhere?"

"Why, I am ready to say that anywhere you ask me to say it. He was the greatest teacher that ever lived."

"I take you at your word," says the Christian conversationalist. "You may select a place where you will make this public statement. I suggest that you make it in a religious service."

4. The one spiritually blind, at a gathering of Christians in prayer, rises to speak of Jesus as the greatest teacher who ever lived. As he continues to portray him as such, Jesus stands out before him more clearly and he sees him to be what he claimed to be—the Saviour of sinners.

5. With this new vision, the one spiritually blind ceases to be blind.

THE CONFERENCE

Spiritual blindness may be caused by ignorance, error, or sin. Its treatment depends upon the cause that produced it. If ignorance is the cause, tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love. If error is the cause, discover and correct it. If the cataract of sin has overgrown the eye, this must be removed. In most instances, ignorance, error, and sin all appear in varying degree. The young beggar was blind physically and spiritually. Jesus healed him of both forms of blindness. He ministered first to the need of which the man was most deeply conscious—his physical blindness. In so doing he won his gratitude and his confidence. A rule for soul-winners: "Gain the gratitude and the confidence of every unsaved person you can." Invest time, service, and money in creating opportunities for personal work. Sow the seeds of Christian kindness and some day the Master will say: "Behold the field is white unto harvest."

The blind beggar followed as the light led. He lived up to the truth as he saw it. He received Jesus first as a miracle-worker, then as a prophet, and at last as the Son of God. Present the truth of the gospel to men as they are able to receive it. Impatience is the peril of personal workers. Religion is rooted in the reality of the moral

world and no Christian need despair of winning to Christ any one who earnestly believes in the regnancy of right.

Introduce Christ to him ; stimulate him to a study of his life ; demand of him an explanation of Christ ; question him : "Who do you say the Son of Man is? Will you follow him?"

The inquirers at Pentecost had been instructed by Peter. Their question was, "What shall we do?" The Ethiopian treasurer was well read in the law and the prophets. He needed a clearer interpretation : "Of whom spake this man?" The blind beggar, darkened in mind, needed even fuller instruction. What did this instruction embrace?

The Christian conversationalist should be ready to present to the modern blind beggar the whole plan of salvation. What is this plan and how should it be presented to an unsaved man?

Reports of the week's work, arrangements for personal interviews, a season of prayer.

V

THE STUDY HOUR—ONE WHO WAS A SINNER

Luke 7 : 36–50.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : At the table of Simon the Pharisee. (2) Characters : Jesus the Christ ; Simon the Pharisee ; a woman who was a sinner ; the disciples of Jesus, and the friends and guests of Simon. (3) The feast in Simon's house, attended by Jesus, his disciples, and the friends of Simon, is interrupted by the entrance of a woman of the street (Luke 7 : 36, 37).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. The woman flings herself at the feet of Jesus as he reclines at the table, and weeping, she washes his feet with her tears and anoints

them with precious ointment, wiping them with her hair. So she voices her love and her cry of need (Luke 7 : 38).

3. The Crisis. A breathless silence : the woman does not know whether the Master will recognize her ; the Pharisee doubts the prophetic claims of Jesus ; the guests wait the words of Jesus (Luke 7 : 39, 40).

4. The Moment of Suspense. Jesus speaks in answer to the unspoken request of the woman and the unvoiced opinion of the Pharisee. His answer is not a rebuke, but an infinitely delicate explanation of the situation (Luke 7 : 40–46).

5. The Outcome. "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much." "Thy faith has saved thee ; go in peace."

A MODERN WRETCHED SINNER

1. (1) Scene : A modern fashionable church. (2) Characters : A wretched sinner, shabbily clad, with face bearing the marks of dissipation ; a Christian conversationalist ; a Christian minister ; modern Pharisees and the congregation. (3) The wretched sinner drifts into the church at the morning service. He waits embarrassed for some one to show him a seat ; ushers avoid him. Modern Pharisees, going to their rented pews, eye him suspiciously. One suggests to an usher that he be shown the door. The Christian conversationalist approaches and invites the wretched sinner to sit with him.

2. The minister preaches an eloquent sermon upon the text : "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The wretched sinner listens with closest attention. The impulse comes to the Christian conversationalist to speak to this sinner. The service ends. In a friendly way, these two discuss the sermon. The conversationalist asks the sinner home with him.

3. In the quiet of the Christian's home, the conversation is renewed : "Brother," says the Christian conversationalist, "do you realize that our pastor's message was addressed to you ? Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He came to save you."

"That cannot be true," says the wretched sinner, "you do not know how wicked I am." Sobbing, he tells the bitter story of a life of sin and crime, closing with the declaration that it is too late for him to be saved.

4. The Christian conversationalist, opening his Bible, reads the story of the Lost Son, the Pharisee and the Publican, closing with the words of the Master to Simon in the presence of the woman who was a sinner, "Jesus came to save sinners" (Luke 19 : 10 ; Matt. 18 : 11 ; Luke 9 : 56 ; John 3 : 16).

5. As the Christian teaches, the Holy Spirit regenerates ; the sinner realizes that his sins are forgiven and goes to his home in peace.

THE CONFERENCE

"Seeking sinners" was a part of the Master's mission. It is also a part of the Christian's mission. What are the best means for its accomplishment ? Churches sometimes open missions in religiously destitute sections. The Christian conversationalist is called to be a peripatetic mission anywhere and always.

The presence of an unsaved man at a church service is a challenge to every member of that church : "Make me a Christian if you can." The best methods in dealing with the unconverted attending church.

Among those who have deeply sinned is found the greatest emotion. The relation of emotion to religion. How are emotional temperaments to be treated ? The Christian should assure himself that the emotion displayed is sincere and genuine. Sometimes we feel that the emotion is ex-

cessive. We do not know how deeply conscious the sinner may be of his exceeding sinfulness. To such a sinner give, as the Saviour did, the tenderest sympathy. When he has accepted Christ, put him to work for Christ. His emotion must find expression.

Reports of the week's work; discussion of personal problems; the delegating of new personal work; a season of prayer.

THE SKEPTICAL

Modern Skepticism
The Athenian Skeptic
The Jewish Skeptic
The Roman Skeptic

I

THE STUDY HOUR—MODERN SKEPTICISM

INTRODUCTION. Skepticism defined. The sense in which this is an age of doubt. The causes of the conditions that now exist: (1) The extension of time and space. Contrast the ideas of the solar system in the Middle Ages with ideas of to-day; the universe of Cosmas with the universe of Newcomb and Pickering. (2) The spirit of modern criticism. Every statement of the Christian belief has been subjected to the scrutiny of a merciless criticism. (3) The growth of irreverence. The ever-present danger of liberty degenerating into unbridled license. The development of a colossal human egotism, destroying the perspective of the true relation of God to man. The passing of that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom. (4) The concentration of thought upon the things of this world. (5) The greed for earthly success.

1. The Modern Greek Skeptic. The Greek in every age is the seeker after wisdom. He demands to-day that every utterance of religion shall be tested by the canons of reason. Greek skepticism in modern literature: Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, Hardy. The faith of science in the uniformity of law and in the universe as grounded in reason. The tendency of the scientific mind to reject the miraculous and the supernatural. The citadel of agnosticism. Its recent overthrow. Personality as a fact, a force, a freedom. The higher forms of truth can be expressed only in personality. Illustrate. The fact of Christ—the verity of his words, the perfection of his character. The force of Christ—his sway

over the lives of men ; his power in the world to-day ; the inspiration, the new power, the divine re-enforcement he gives to his followers to-day. The freedom in Christ—the freedom of the truth ; the new delight in right doing. To those who receive him, he is the wisdom of God.

2. The Modern Jewish Skeptic. The Jew in every age is the seeker after a sign, a miracle. He demands to-day that every utterance of religion shall be attested by unmistakable divine authority. He expects compulsion in the matters of belief. To the declaration that the heart is transformed in its affections through faith in Christ, he asks, "How can these things be?" He willingly subscribes to creeds, submits to ecclesiastical forms, and believes in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, but does not understand and is thoroughly skeptical of a salvation through grace. This form of skepticism dominates Christendom. Thoughtful Catholics, both Roman and Greek, are at heart Jewish skeptics. Not seeing the sign of power in the gospel of Christ, they turn to the sign of power to which the patriarch or the pope lays claim. Jewish skepticism tends to superstition. Show clearly to what degradation of thought and conduct the demand for a visible authority leads. The gospel does not give certainty of knowledge, but a new power for acquiring knowledge. The modern miracles are spiritual and as such rank higher than miracles in the natural world. The miracle of conversion, the perpetual miracle of spiritual resurrection are indubitable proofs of the power of Christ—greater proofs than healing the sick, raising the dead, or even the blazing sign in the heavens.

3. The Modern Roman Skeptic. The Roman in every age is the seeker after earthly power and pleasure. He demands the reins of authority and recognizes religion only as a force through which he may extend his rule. He brings things to pass. In business, money is his god ; in politics,

power ; in society, success. To these in the strictest sense he devotes himself. He does not hesitate to offer himself as a living sacrifice unto his god. His ambition is to write after every battle in life, "I came, I saw, I conquered." To win success or to escape from a situation that threatens him with loss, he does not hesitate to violate every dictate of conscience. Many are the modern Pilates. His attitude toward religion is the mingling of contempt and fear. To every man of God, he contemptuously says, "What is truth ?" Yet dreams frighten him, and he not infrequently consults palmists and clairvoyants. His interests are all bound up in this world, and he never considers that shrouds have no pockets. He tries to believe that there is no judgment day ; and he succeeds in living as if there were no God. What message does the Christian conversationalist bear to this skeptic ? The example of the Master may be followed. After the affirmation of the reality of truth, the regnancy of righteousness, the kingdom of Christ, let your answer be silence. Unto this day it is true, pearls must not be cast before swine.

THE CONFERENCE

The time may profitably be devoted to a study of the various types of skeptics within the circle of the members' acquaintance. Does the division into Greek, Jewish, and Roman skeptics include all the skeptics of to-day ? Are there any instances in the Bible where skepticism is answered by argument ? State instances where affirmation rather than argument is used.

The difficulty in dealing with the skeptic is that he insists upon discussing ideas instead of relations. He questions, argues, assails, denies, creates dilemmas, but avoids the question of his personal relation to God. The task of the Christian conversationalist is to direct the discussion so

that it will be removed from the field of reason to the field of emotion.

If the skeptic insists upon argument, "carry the war into Africa." Answer question with question; problem with problem; mystery with mystery. Show him how strong the argument is against believing in his own senses.

Select Scripture references to be used in dealing (1) with earnest-minded skeptics; (2) with triflers; (3) with those who doubt: *a.* the existence of God; *b.* the inspiration of the Bible; *c.* the divinity of Christ, *d.* future punishment.

Reports of the week; the delegating of new work; a season of prayer.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—THE ATHENIAN SKEPTIC

Acts 17 : 16–34.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene: Athens, the center of Greek learning. Describe it at the time of Paul's visit; its temples and schools; its religion and philosophies. (2) Characters: Paul who is spending a few days in this city, on his way to Corinth; a number of Athenian citizens, for the most parts Stoics and Epicureans. (3) These gentlemen, hearing of Paul's new and peculiar religious views, invite him to deliver a public address (Acts 17 : 16–21).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. Paul's address on Mars' Hill (Acts 17 : 22–31). Introduction: He congratulates the Athenians upon the interest they show in all things pertaining to religion (ver. 22, 23). (1) "The Unknown God" declared: *a.* The Maker of the material universe (ver. 24). *b.* Transcending his creation (ver. 25). *c.* The Creator of mankind, the Source of the unity of the

race (ver. 26). *d.* The object of man's quest (ver. 27, 28). (2) Therefore he is falsely represented in idolatry (ver. 29). (3) God's recent revelation ; attested by the resurrection of Christ (ver. 30, 31).

3. The Crisis. Some mocked ; others said : "We will hear thee again of this."

4. The Moment of Suspense. The inquiry service, "Some men clave unto him."

5. The Outcome. Some believed, among them Dionysius and Damaris.

THE MODERN ATHENIAN SKEPTIC

1. (1) Scene : Any modern town or city. (2) Characters : An apostle of to-day ; citizens to whom he is introduced. (3) The apostle of to-day introduces the subject of religion to these citizens, as he meets them in various public places, club and lodge rooms, hotel lobbies, social receptions, etc. He discusses the general subject, avoiding for the most part personal religion.

2. Arrangements made for a free and public discussion, the address to be made by the apostle of to-day or some one whom he chooses. An outline suggested by the address of Paul. Introduction : The speaker expresses his appreciation of the courtesy shown him, and compliments his audience upon the interest they display in the subject of religion. (1) The Christian conception of God. *a.* The Creator of this wondrous universe. *b.* Evidence of a Supreme Intelligence and the immanence of God. *c.* The unity of the race and the brotherhood of man. *d.* The universality of religion. *e.* Man's quest for God. (2) Modern misconceptions of God. Modern idolatry. (3) Christ, the human life of God. His resurrection and revelation of immortality. (4) The certainty of a judgment to come. A call to repentance.

3. Some may mock ; others will courteously say : "We will come again to hear you."

4. Some may welcome a private conversation with the speaker.

5. Some may believe ; all will have a more intelligent view of the Christian religion.

THE CONFERENCE

Paul's sermon at Athens was a brief statement of Christian theology. What is the difference between religion and theology ? Should revival sermons be doctrinal ? What place should be given to Christian doctrine in personal work ?

Members will present the arguments from Scripture and from accepted facts which they would use in answering modern Athenians (1) who do not believe in the existence of God ; (2) who deny that if he exists, he can be known ; (3) who deny that there is a hereafter ; (4) who deny the resurrection of Christ ; (5) who deny the divinity of Christ.

Reports of the week's work ; new work planned ; pray for the enduement of the Holy Spirit.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—NICODEMUS, A JEWISH SKEPTIC

John 3 : 1–15.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : A night in the city of Jerusalem. (2) Characters : Jesus of Nazareth and Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. (3) Nicodemus, because of the miracles of Jesus, recognizes him as a teacher come from God. He anticipates a discussion upon the kingdom of God (ver. 1, 2).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The new birth. Christ affirms that the kingdom of God cannot be seen

without the power of perception that comes through the new birth (ver. 3). (2) Nicodemus insists that such a change is impossible. Man is physically, morally, spiritually one, a product of all his past (ver. 4). (3) The new birth, Christ replies, marks the entrance into a new and higher order of existence ; this is a spiritual birth, wrought by the Spirit of God ; it manifests its reality by the results produced (ver. 5–8). (4) Nicodemus : "How can these things be?" (ver. 9.) (5) Christ urges trust in himself as the revealer of heavenly truths (ver. 10–13).

3. The Crisis. Trust in Christ is the condition of attaining eternal life (ver. 14, 15).

4. The Moment of Suspense. This period seems to cover a considerable length of time. Nicodemus timidly speaks in Christ's defense (John 7 : 50, 51).

5. The Outcome. Nicodemus at the burial of Jesus (John 19 : 39, 40). Did the timid ruler become a disciple of Jesus?

THE MODERN NICODEMUS

1. (1) Scene: The inquiry room, the minister's study, the fireside of a Christian friend, any place where an earnest, practical man may seek information upon spiritual truth. (2) Characters : An intelligent, well-read, earnest, moral inquirer, somewhat lacking in imagination, and a wise, experienced, consecrated Christian. (3) The modern Nicodemus introduces the subject of Christian religion. He says he recognizes its power in the lives of the devout and in the institutions Christianity has created.

2. (1) The Christian conversationalist shows the source of power in Christianity to be the new birth of the individual. No one can understand the Christian religion without this spiritual experience (1 Cor. 2 : 14). (2) The modern Nicodemus declares that man is the combined product of environment, hereditary influences, and his own

past. These cannot be changed. (3) The Christian conversationalist reaffirms the necessity of the new birth, a transformation of the man's sub-conscious life, radically changing his affections, his mental perspectives, and the direction of his will. This calls for a cleansing from sin and the bestowal of spiritual energy or grace. The place of mystery in religion: There is mystery in everything, from the meanest flower that blooms to the tragedy of human life. As we increase the radius of our knowledge, we increase three-fold the circumference of our ignorance. The realm of mystery is the zone where the light of knowledge begins to fade into the darkness of the unknown. The most learned man is he who stands face to face with the greatest number of unsolved problems. Mystery is the condition under which faith, struggle, and growth are possible. Perfect knowledge renders impossible faith or personal trust. I have experienced the new birth, but I am not able to explain it any more than I am able to explain the movements of the evening breeze. Yet I know it is a fact. Jesus Christ was presented to me. I felt that he was trustworthy. I accepted not only his words but him. I entered into a personal relation to him. I became a new creation through faith in Christ. (4) The modern Nicodemus earnestly asks: "How can these things be?" "You are an intelligent man," replies the Christian conversationalist, "yet you cannot explain how white milk becomes red blood. I tell you what I have experienced and know. I am a different man since my conversion. Will you accept my word? I experienced this spiritual miracle, not by an intellectual process, but by believing in, trusting Jesus Christ" (Mark 16 : 16). The organ of spiritual knowledge is a trusting obedience (John 7 : 17).

3. "As Moses lifted up the servant in the wilderness,

even so must the Son of man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Will you believe on him? The condition of your heart is revealed by your attitude toward Jesus Christ. If you are not drawn toward him, it is because you love darkness, and this love of darkness produces all the evil in the world. You need a new heart."

4. Emphasize the love of God (John 3 : 16). Urge the giving up of dependence upon human reason and plead with him to make the venture of faith (John 1 : 12).

5. If he accepts Christ, insist upon an immediate or speedy open profession (Rom. 10 : 9, 10 ; Matt. 10 : 32, 33).

THE CONFERENCE

The modern Nicodemus presents the problem of the earnest-minded skeptic. He is thoughtful and well informed. He questions every statement and is reluctant to accept any affirmation without convincing proof. The method of the Master was (1) the fact of regeneration ; (2) the process of regeneration ; (3) the cause of regeneration. Convince this skeptic that a wondrous spiritual change actually takes place (John 3 : 5, 6 ; 1 : 12, 13 ; 1 John 4 : 7 ; 5 : 1 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 17). The process is mysterious (John 3 : 7, 8 ; 1 Peter 1 : 23). The cause of regeneration (James 1 : 18 ; John 1 : 13). The source of the new birth is in the will of God acting through the Spirit of God ; the instrumental cause is the word of truth ; the vital sentences in this word of truth are : "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Show him the difference between the natural and the regenerated man in their powers to grasp the spiritual realities (John 3 : 11, 12 ; 2 Cor. 2 : 14 ; Rom. 11 :

33 ; 1 Cor. 13 : 11, 12). Show him the way of salvation ; surrender to Christ in loving trust. Show him the way unto truth (John 7 : 17).

What is the best course to pursue in dealing with the philosophical and the argumentative? Study the Master's treatment of theological questions.

Reports of the week's work ; study of personal problems ; delegating the work for the week ; a season of prayer.

IV

THE STUDY HOUR—THE ROMAN SKEPTIC

Matt. 27 : 19–26 ; Mark 15 : 1–20 ; Luke 23 : 1–24 ; John 18 : 28 to 19 : 16.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : Early morning before the Prætorium in Jerusalem. (2) Characters : Pontius Pilate, the worldly Roman procurator ; Jesus of Nazareth ; chief priests and scribes ; a multitude of people. (3) Jesus, bound, presented to Pilate, who sternly asks, "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The charges preferred. Pilate's reply, "Take him and judge him according to your law." Further charges made : Perverting the nation, forbidding to pay tribute, claiming to be king. (2) The interview between Jesus and Pilate. Jesus explains the nature of his kingdom. Pilate's skepticism, "What is truth?" Pilate's first decision, "I find in him no fault at all." (3) Jesus is sent to Herod for trial. Pilate's appeal to contemporary authority.

3. The Crisis. Jesus again before Pilate. Pilate's appeal to the majority. Barabbas or Jesus? "What then shall I do with Jesus called the Christ?"

4. The Moment of Suspense. (1) The scourging. "Behold the man." (2) The threat of the mob. Pilate's fear

of Cæsar. (3) Pilate's last appeal. He consults his own selfish interests.

5. The Catastrophe. "Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified."

THE MODERN ROMAN SKEPTIC

1. (1) Scene: The place of business or the home of the successful man. (2) Characters: The successful man and an apostle of to-day. (3) The place of Christ in history or any similar subject marks the beginning of the conversation.

2. (1) The First Interview. The apostle of to-day: "Have you ever thought that you are called to sit in judgment upon Jesus Christ and to decide upon the justice of his claims?" The successful man: "No, I have never thought of it in that way. I leave all such questions to the preachers and the church people." The apostle of to-day: "Jesus Christ lays claim to all authority on earth. If his claims are true he has the right to direct you and your conduct. You are forced to sit in judgment. You must affirm and submit to his authority or you must condemn him as a false pretender. Have you studied his life and teaching?" The successful man: "What shall I study? The higher critics have proved that the Bible is an evolution, the work of human minds. Where am I going to find the truth?" The apostle of to-day: "The Bible is not the question we are discussing. What is your attitude toward him whom the Bible describes is the question. Have you read the Bible? Common justice demands that you read the Bible before you attack it. At any rate will you promise to read those sections that describe the life of Jesus Christ?" The promise is given.

(2) The Second Interview. The apostle of to-day: "What is your decision now regarding Jesus Christ?" The successful man: "I find in him no fault at all. Yet I

am not ready to submit to his authority. I have decided to refer the matter to the ablest minds of modern times. I am going in for a course of reading on modern philosophy. Christ was a great moral teacher. But the new learning all seems to be against his claims of divinity."

(3) The Third Interview. The apostle of to-day: "What are the results of your investigations?" The successful man: "Nothing that is satisfactory. They are all divided. However, this is a fact: the majority—the vast majority—of men are not Christians and I am willing to take my chances with the majority." The apostle of to-day: "Are you willing to join in condemning the only one in human history of whom you can truthfully say, 'I find in him no fault at all'?" The successful man: "I refuse to have anything further to do with this matter. I want to dismiss it from my mind."

3. The apostle of to-day: "There can be no neutrality. It is inevitable that in this life you determine what your personal relations to Jesus shall be. So long as you refuse to obey him you are condemning him as truly as Pilate did. With more light and better influences than Pilate had you are in rebellion against Christ. Jesus says, 'He that is not with me is against me.'"

4. The successful man: "I recognize that Jesus is the world's supreme teacher in morals. I intend to follow his teachings more than I have ever done. But to direct my life in perfect harmony with his teaching would injure my business, my position, and would require the giving up of much I am unwilling to surrender." The apostle of to-day: "What will it profit you if you have all you now enjoy and all you hope to gain if you lose your own soul?" (Mark 8 : 36; Gal. 6 : 7, 8; 1 John 2 : 17; Luke 12 : 17–21; Mark 8 : 38.) The time has come for the most earnest prayer and personal persuasion. Urge him to pray in

his own behalf. Show him that he is condemned already and if he remains in the existing state is sure to be lost (John 3 : 17).

5. Let us hope that he surrenders to Christ crucified.

THE CONFERENCE

The modern Pilate is a trifler as well as a skeptic. His god is success. He doubts the reality of right and of truth. The plan of salvation appears unto him unreasonable, not to say absurd (1 Cor. 1 : 18 ; 2 Cor. 4 : 3, 4 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 10–12). Every attempt made by the personal worker to force the issue—the acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ —is met by evasion. The characteristic attitude of the modern Pilate, "I neither accept nor reject." The reply, Matt. 6 : 24 ; 12 : 30 ; Luke 11 : 23 ; Isa. 55 : 6 ; Luke 12 : 19, 20 ; James 4 : 13, 14 ; Matt. 6 : 33 ; Luke 13 : 24, 25 ; Heb. 3 : 15 ; Prov. 29 : 1 ; John 8 : 24 ; Rom. 14 : 12.

What investigations did Pilate make of Jesus himself and the charges against him? What convictions were formed as a result of these investigations? In what ways did he seek to evade the issue? Why did Pilate condemn Christ? Apply the answers to the Pilates of to-day. An important work of the Christian conversationalist is to aid in the investigation of Jesus and to furnish abundant evidence of the verity of his claims. The presentation of Christ to a man with no convictions or a man whose absorbing selfishness prevents him from carrying out his convictions is doomed to failure. Under what conditions should the Christian conversationalist refuse to speak?

Reports of the week ; the delegating of new personal work ; a season of prayer.

THE INDIFFERENT

The Indolence of Indifference
Gallio
Felix the Procrastinator
The Builder of Barns
Herod Agrippa

I

THE STUDY HOUR—THE INDOLENCE OF INDIFFERENCE

THIS is the age of tolerance. And tolerance is running to seed. The Christian religion is the most lovingly intolerant religion that ever existed. Its missionary enterprises are expressions of its intolerance of erroneous teaching. The tolerance of to-day voices the sentiment, "It doesn't make any difference what you believe if you are sincere in believing it." It smiles indulgently upon the fallacies and heresies of Roman Catholicism and every other false teaching that boasts the name of Christian and complacently explains that "We are all striving for the same heaven." The tolerance of to-day is not marked by the union of personal conviction and personal love that leads one to hate the error and yet love him who holds it; but by a supine indifference to the beliefs and destiny of those who differ with us in our conceptions of Christ. The tolerance of to-day is the product of indolence and indifference. It is a tolerance as deadly as it is false. There is a widespread belief that Jesus was mistaken in regard to his teaching of future punishment; "Our Father will not suffer any to be lost," is the easy and complacent creed of him whose indifference to the condition of his fellow-men leads him to make no sacrifice for them. There is no need of seeking to save the lost if the lost are to be saved anyhow. The gospel becomes not only old-fashioned, but out of date. The causes of this indifference are easily found: Thoughtlessness, heartlessness, and willfulness.

The absence of conviction is the proof of thoughtless-

ness. This is a scientific age. Science develops observers, not thinkers. It is an age of specialization. Men become experts in certain departments. Their studies are absorbing. Limiting their fields of study, they become provincial. The mass of mankind are interested in business—the production and the distribution of goods. This does not produce either deep or original thought. The cares of this age choke the word. The Bible is studied by the few. The church is attended by the few, and the thought of the Son of God and his gospel rarely enters the minds of the multitude.

Thoughtlessness and heartlessness follow each other as certainly as the night follows the day. If the thoughts are afar from God, the heart is also. The lovers of money, of the world, of sensuous and sensual pleasures are too selfish to love their neighbors and their God. They are too indolent to engage earnestly in the quest for God. They are sublimely unconscious of their selfishness. Their hearts are hardened.

Freedom gives opportunity for willfulness. The sense of an authority over us is not vivid and convincing. Civil laws and law makers are not revered. Among old and young irreverence grows. Individualism becomes as readily a curse as a blessing. Better the slave than the wild beast. Religious freedom furnishes a larger opportunity for rebellion against God. As the bounds of freedom are enlarged, the greater and more awful the rebellion. Wealth, education, social and political eminence, the various forms in which the freedom of the individual find expression only multiply the ways in which man may lift his puny hands against his God. The sense of ownership that denies God an interest in property is powerful: "I may do what I please with my own." Men are unwilling to let Jesus rule over them, "Having the understanding darkened, being

alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness."

These multitudes of modern Sadducees, indifferent to religion, can be and must be reached through the personal efforts of devoted Christians. They refuse to attend the preaching of the gospel. They treat the most serious themes as trivial. They are heartless and willful, proud and exacting. They offer the most difficult of all problems for the personal worker to solve. If the personal worker fails—they are lost.

THE CONFERENCE

Members will present studies of men and women in their acquaintance who have become indifferent to religion and as far as possible point out causes for the conditions.

Reports for the week; the delegating of new personal work, a season of prayer.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—GALLIO

Acts 18 : 12–17.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene: Before the judgment seat of Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, in the city of Corinth, A. D. 55. (2) Characters: Paul the apostle; Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue; Gallio, the deputy, brother of Seneca the philosopher, a Stoic in belief, a man of integrity and honor, amiable in temper and polished in manner; a mob of excited Jews and a large number of Greeks. (3) The charge preferred by the Jews

against Paul: "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law" (ver. 13).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. Paul rises to defend himself and to present the gospel of Christ (ver. 14).

3. The Crisis. Gallio dismisses the whole controversy as lying outside the limits of Roman law. His interest in morality; his indifference to religion (ver. 14, 15).

4. The Moment of Suspense. The rising of the Greek mob. The beating of Sosthenes. Gallio's icy indifference led him to ignore disorder when that disorder arose from differences in religious belief (ver. 16, 17).

5. The Outcome. "Gallio cared for none of those things" (ver. 17).

THE MODERN GALLIO

1. (1) Scene: Any place where conversation may be held. (2) Characters: The modern Stoic, a man of fine moral character, courteous manners, interested in good government, a lover of his country, but utterly indifferent to religion, refusing to attend church, to read the Bible or any religious book, and who from a dignified complacency looks down upon the Christian religion. He has a profound contempt for what he terms "emotional religion." The other character, a Christian conversationalist. (3) A moral question being introduced into the conversation leads the Christian conversationalist to remark that morality and religion are closely akin; indeed, a consciousness of duty is the originating condition of religion.

2. (1) A modern Stoic: "You Christians expect to be saved by appropriating the righteousness of another. I have no patience with the idea. I am responsible for what I do. If there is another world, I will reap there just what I have sown here. If I am saved—that is the word you use—it will be because I am worth the saving. In the

meantime, I am doing all the good I can for my fellow-men and letting religion, with its exaltation of the emotions, its prayers, and psalm-singing, alone. It is all right for women, children, and emotional men, but a strong man doesn't want any of it in his life." (2) The Christian: "Would you object to telling me of some of the good deeds you have performed?" He recounts a number of kindnesses and the pleasure derived in their performance. (3) "Have you ever been ashamed of your conduct?" asked the Christian. "You mean, have I ever sinned? Oh, yes," he replies, "but I am ready to place my record beside that of the members of your church." (4) "Do you believe that every call of duty is conditioned upon man's power to perform it?" "Certainly," he replies; "there is no obligation without ability." "Then a man does not," continues the Christian, "because he wills not to do it. Have you had this experience?" "Often," replies the Stoic. "Then there is a twist in your will." "Yes." "Have you ever thought that God had a plan to get that twist out, giving at the same time new strength to the will? If he loves men, should not his love express itself in supplying man's greatest need?" (5) "What means has he used?" asks the Stoic. "Means similar to those you use in educating a child—personal influence," replies the Christian. "The child receives the teacher and the teacher gives the child power to know more of history, science, and mathematics. To those who receive Jesus Christ as Teacher, Redeemer, and Lord, he gives the power to become sons of God. The twist is taken out. The new relation changes the disposition and the life."

3. "Christ stands before you as the one perfect being in human history. Will you accept him as Master?"

4. "That means that I shall live differently from what I am now doing," says the Stoic, "and I am very well satis-

fied with my present life." "You are a sinner," earnestly replies the Christian conversationalist. "You are violating the first and greatest commandment (Matt. 22 : 37, 38). Furthermore, your righteousness is on a par with the Pharisees' (Matt. 5 : 20). God looks not at what you do but at your heart (Luke 16 ; 15). A moral life cannot save you. Accept the gift of eternal life, which is yours if you trust not your good works but Christ." Read the account of the Pharisee and the publican.

5. May he go forth with the joy of the justified publican.

THE CONFERENCE

"And Gallio cared for none of those things." This is the attitude of the multitudes who rarely, if ever, enter the doors of a church. How to gain their thoughtful attention is the problem of the present. Their eternal destiny depends largely upon the faithfulness and the good sense of their Christian acquaintances. These should make religion attractive and thrillingly interesting. How can a religious conversation be made attractive and thrillingly interesting? The conversation should begin where there is agreement of view regarding religion ; it should progress with difference of view, producing discussion, toward a new agreement of view. Study sympathetically the view taken of religion by the indifferent individual. Do not attempt too much in one conversation. Expect the Spirit of God to aid in drawing him to Christ. Be patient ; be courteous ; be persistent ; be prayerful. If the modern Gallio recognizes the authority of the Scriptures, the problem is simplified. He may urge his morality (Rom. 10 : 3 ; 2 Cor. 10 : 12). Show what sin is (1 John 3 : 4 ; 5 : 17 ; John 3 : 18 ; 8 : 34 ; 9 : 39 ; Rom. 8 : 7, 8 ; 14 : 12 ; 1 Peter 4 : 18 ; Gal. 3 : 22). Morality is a relation to a law ; religion is a relation to a person. Wrong rela-

tions to the moral law produce sins ; wrong relations to a personal God is sin.

Members will report conversations with those who were seemingly indifferent and show how this indifference was changed to interest.

Reports of the week's work ; delegating work for the ensuing week ; a season of prayer.

III

THE STUDY HOUR—FELIX, THE PROCRASTINATOR

Acts 23 : 31 to 24 : 27.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : The judgment hall of Felix. (2) Characters : Felix the governor ; Paul the apostle ; Ananias the high priest ; Tertullus the orator ; Drusilla the wife of Felix ; the elders and the court. (3) Paul sent to Felix a prisoner from Jerusalem (Acts 23 : 23–34).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The accusation of Tertullus (Acts 24 : 1–9). (2) The defense of Paul (Acts 24 : 10–21). (3) The governor defers sentence (Acts 24 : 22, 23).

3. The Crisis. (1) Paul preaching before Felix and Drusilla. His theme : Faith in Christ. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come (Acts 24 : 24). (2) Felix trembled. (3) Felix : "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24 : 25).

4. The Moment of Suspense. The two years of Paul's imprisonment.

5. The Outcome. Paul bound in chains ; Felix bound in sin.

THE MODERN FELIX

1. (1) Scene : A modern church. (2) Characters : A minister of the gospel, an unsaved man, and a personal worker. (3) A congregation assembled to hear the gospel preached.

2. An earnest presentation of the gospel by the minister.

3. In the inquiry room. The personal worker pleads with the unsaved man to accept Christ.

4. The unsaved man : "I won't decide now. I will wait until later." The personal worker : "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found" (Isa. 55 : 6 ; Prov. 27 : 1 ; Matt. 25 : 10–12 ; Matt. 24 : 44). Before you do anything else seek the kingdom of God (Matt. 6 : 33).

5. May he not wait for a more convenient season.

THE CONFERENCE

The temptation to procrastinate comes to every one seeking Christ. In conversations with the unsaved ones the excuse "I will some day, but not now," is heard more frequently than any other. It is a critical moment when the sinner moves the indefinite postponement of the subject of personal religion. Sometimes it is advisable to amend this motion by making it a definite postponement. Ask if he will agree to dismiss from his mind the consideration of his personal salvation for a year. He will reply, "No, I may die during the year." Then bring it down to a month, a week, a day and ask if he is willing to be denied the opportunity of seeking salvation for even one day? (James 4 : 13, 14 ; Luke 12 : 19.) Show him that he can be saved only in the present (Isa. 55 : 6 ; 2 Cor. 6 : 2 ; Heb. 3 : 15 ; Prov. 27 : 1 ; Rom. 10 : 9, 10).

Among children one frequently hears : "I want to be a Christian, but I am too young," or " I would like to be a Christian, but mother thinks that I am not old enough to know what I am doing."

When are children old enough to become Christians? Should the appeal be made to them to accept Christ as soon as they know by experience that they are sinners? What personal work should be done among parents in the interest of their children? What responsibilities rest upon the teachers of the Bible-school?

The procrastinator offers many reasons. The following are frequently heard:

1. "I will wait until I have more feeling." Show that salvation depends upon turning from sin (Isa. 55 : 7; John 1 : 11, 12; Acts 16 : 31). The joy of the Christian comes after faith (1 Peter 11 : 8; John 15 : 11; 1 Cor. 15 : 57).

2. "I must become better before I become a Christian." Point to Jesus as the sin bearer (Isa. 53 : 6; 1 Peter 2 : 24; Rom. 5 : 6–11); his relation to sinners (Matt. 9 : 12, 13; Luke 18 : 10–14; Luke 19 : 10).

3. "I am afraid of ridicule" (Mark 8 : 38; John 12 43; Matt. 5 : 10–12; 10 : 32; 1 Peter 4 : 14).

4. "I expect to become a Christian sometime. I do no like excitement. I prefer to wait for a more convenien season" (Heb. 3 : 7, 8; 2 Cor. 6 : 2; Prov. 29 : 1; Mat 25 : 10–13; James 4 : 13, 14; Matt. 6 : 33; Isa. 55 : 6).

5. "It is too late. I have sinned away the day of grace of (2 Peter 3 : 9; Rev. 22 : 17; Isa. 1 : 18; 1 John 1 : 9; Rom. 10 : 13; Jer. 29 : 13; 1 Peter 2 : 24; Eph. 1 : 7).

Reports of the week's work; discussion of personal problems; the delegating of new work; a season of prayer.

IV

THE STUDY HOUR—THE BUILDER OF BARNS

Luke 12 : 16–21.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene: 3 to fertile lands of Galilee. (2) Characters: A rich fa ut to

and God. (3) The perplexity of the rich farmer (ver. 16, 17).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The rich farmer resolves to build greater barns (ver. 18). (2) His soliloquy: "Soul . . . eat, drink, be merry."

3. The crisis. The voice of God: "Thou foolish one, this night is thy life required of thee" (ver. 20).

4. The moment of suspense. The waiting for death.

5. The catastrophe. The heirs in the morning gather about the dead body of the builder of barns. "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

THE MODERN BUILDER OF BARNS

1. (1) Scene: Any American community. (2) Characters: A greedy money-lover and Christian conversationalist. (3) The money-lover embarrassed by having more money than he knows how to invest.

2. (1) He resolves to increase all his enterprises. (2) The Christian conversationalist urges him to lay up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6 : 19). (3) Riches, a peril (Mark 4 : 19; Luke 12 : 15; 1 Tim. 6 : 6–10; 1 John 2 : 15–17. (4) The sin of covetousness (Matt. 6 : 24; Col. 3 : 5.)

3. The certainty of death. The greater need of taking care of one's self rather than one's body or property (Mark 8 : 36; Matt. 6 : 33; Mark 10 : 29, 30).

4. The Christian urges him to repent and be saved (John 3 : 36; Rom. 9 : 23; Acts 16 : 31).

5. God knows.

THE CONFERENCE

The successful worldling, interested in business or the pleasures of society, presents a most difficult problem. As in the case of the builder of barns, God is often the only personal worker who dares to approach this one. If the subject of personal religion is being discussed with this per-

son, the following reasons for not accepting Christ may be expected :

1. "There is too much to give up" (Matt. 10 : 28 ; Mark 8 : 35–37 ; John 12 : 25 ; Matt. 6 : 33 ; Phil. 3 : 7, 8 ; 1 John 2 : 15).

2. "I will no longer be welcomed in the social circle in which I now move" (Ps. 1 : 1, 2 ; James 4 : 4 ; John 15 : 19 ; 1 John 2 : 15 ; Phil. 4 : 13 ; Matt. 25 : 34).

3. "It would interfere with my earthly prospects" (Mark 10 : 23–28 ; 8 : 35–38 ; 1 Tim. 4 : 7–10 ; Rom. 14 : 17 ; Luke 18 : 29, 30).

4. "I cannot give up some pleasures" (Luke 8 : 14 ; Rom. 1 : 32 ; Matt. 16 : 26 ; Luke 21 : 34 ; Col. 3 : 2–6 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 12 ; 2 Peter 2 : 12–16).

5. "There is some one I cannot forgive" (Matt. 6 : 15 ; Matt. 18 : 23–35 ; Eph. 4 : 32 ; Phil. 4 : 13).

V

THE STUDY HOUR—HEROD AGRIPPA

Acts 25 : 13 to 26 : 32.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : Cæsarea in the time of Paul ; the visit of Agrippa II., king of Chalcis, and his sister, Berenice, A. D. 62. (2) Characters : Herod Agrippa II., the real head of the Jewish hierarchy, having the appointment of the high priest ; his sister, Berenice; Festus, the Roman governor; Paul, the apostle; military officials, the leading men of Cæsarea and the governor's court. (3) With great pomp, Agrippa and Berenice enter the audience chamber of Festus. Paul is brought before them. Festus, in a ceremonious speech, describes the circumstances under which the prisoner was brought under his notice. Agrippa gives Paul permission to speak (Acts 25 : 13 to 26 : 1). Paul congratulates himself that he is about to

address one who is an expert in Jewish customs and questions (Acts 26 : 2, 3).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) He defends himself against the charge of heresy (ver. 4–8). He describes his former persecution of the Christians (ver. 9, 17). (3) His conversion and divine commission (ver. 12–18). (4) His preaching, though in accord with the Jewish Scriptures, has brought upon him the hatred of the Jews (ver. 19–21).

3. The Crisis. (1) Is it incredible that the Messiah should suffer and rise from the dead? This is what the prophets and Moses foretold (ver. 22, 23). (2) The interruption by Festus and Paul's defense (ver. 24, 25). Paul's appeal to Agrippa, "Believest thou the prophets?"

4. The Moment of Suspense. Agrippa: "Thou wilt soon persuade me to be a Christian."

5. The Catastrophe. Paul's prayer for Agrippa (ver. 29).

THE MODERN HEROD AGRIPPA

1. (1) Scene: Any place where an uninterrupted conversation may be held upon the claims of the Christian religion. A meeting by previous engagement. (2) Characters: A man of prominence, widely read, of Christian parentage, and a Christian conversationalist. (3) The man of prominence courteously asks the Christian to begin the discussion of the subject for which the engagement was made.

2. After expressing his appreciation of the attitude of mind and the courtesy shown by the one he is addressing the Christian describes: (1) His former attitude toward the Christian religion; (2) His conversion and the influence of this experience upon his subsequent life; (3) Christ as the fulfillment of prophecy and the explanation of the purpose of the universe (Gal. 4 : 4, 5).

3. (1) Is it incredible that God, who has put his thought into every motion, every law, every form of life in the ma-

terial universe should give his fullest revelation in man, his highest creation? The gospel of Christ is the gospel of a person. Personality is the necessary expression of the highest forms of truth. Christ is the unveiling of the Father (John 14 : 8–10). (2) Do you believe the prophets? Christ fulfills their prophecies. Do you believe the testimonies of the apostles and the faithful in all ages? Do you believe in the Christianity of your mother? I know you do.

4. Almost persuaded. Urge the immediate acceptance of Christ (Rom. 6 : 23 ; Acts 4 : 12 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 8–21). Plead and pray.

5. God grant that he may be, not almost, but fully persuaded to become a Christian.

THE CONFERENCE

The problem for discussion : What to do with the person who is "almost persuaded." The difficulties that we usually meet lie within. Fear, deep penitence, consciousness of weakness, doubt regarding the willingness of God to forgive characterize those who are on the point of accepting Christ.

1. "I am afraid that I will not hold out" (John 10 : 28, 29 ; 1 Peter 1 : 5 ; 2 Thess. 3 : 3 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 13 ; Jude 24 ; Isa. 41 : 10 ; 2 Cor. 12 : 9 ; Rom. 8 : 35–39 ; 1 John 4 : 4).

2. "I am too great a sinner" (1 Tim. 1 : 15 ; Rom. 5 : 6, 7 ; Ezek. 36 : 26, 27 ; Luke 19 : 10 ; Isa. 1 : 18 ; 1 Peter 3 : 18 ; Eph. 2 : 8, 9).

3. "I am too weak" (2 Cor. 12 : 9, 10 ; Phil. 4 : 13 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 13 ; Isa. 40 : 29–31 ; Matt. 6 : 26 ; Rom. 8 : 31 ; 2 Tim. 1 : 12).

4. "God won't receive me" (Rom. 10 : 13 ; John 6 : 37 ; 2 Peter 3 : 9 ; John 3 : 16 ; Rom. 5 : 6–8 ; John 1 : 12 ; Rom. 10 : 9, 10).

Reports of the week ; the delegating of new work ; a season of prayer.

THE SEEKING OF JESUS

Jesus as a Personal Worker
The Woman of Samaria
The Rich Young Ruler
Saul of Tarsus

I

THE STUDY HOUR—JESUS AS A PERSONAL WORKER

AN immense capacity for work is requisite to greatness, and tested by this standard, Jesus still preserves his pre-eminence among men. He was a tireless worker. The record of the Gospels gives us but a faint conception of his labors, his journeys, his days of exhausting ministrations. "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day" reveals a deep and abiding consciousness of his being under orders and commissioned to perform a mighty task.

The benefactors of mankind have been those who have increased the valuation of man. Jesus placed man and the wealth of the world in the balances and declared that man outweighed the world. Jesus affirmed by word, by action, and by death that the good of man was an object worthy of the effort of God. To this end he worked.

Great men believe in themselves, and their greatness is recognized as other men accept their estimate. Jesus believed in himself. The object of his public ministry was to prove his trustworthiness. "I am worthy of your trust" is the meaning of his "Follow me," his "Confess me before men," his "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." This too is the object of Christian work: the proving of the trustworthiness of Jesus.

Many were the methods of Jesus. He sought through conversation, through preaching, through the working of miracles, and finally through his death and resurrection to prove that he was worthy of the loving, unquestioning and unwavering trust of all men. "Believe me" is his con-

tinuous appeal. He urges any basis for this trust : his words, his works, or a personal knowledge acquired by daily companionship. He does not hesitate to show his scarred hands and pierced side to confirm the trust of a doubting disciple. No legitimate means were left unused in awakening and developing this confidence. He did not hesitate to use even public prayer as means of gaining personal trust.

He welcomed every sincere expression of trust and sought at once to promote its growth. In the presence of unbelief he could not exercise his mighty powers, because no reason then existed for their exercise. His silences are explained by his knowledge that the gaining of personal trust was under the circumstances impossible. John explains the writing of his Gospel in the following words : "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that believing ye might have life through his name." The motive that inspired John to write, dominated the activities of Jesus.

The method and the manner of Jesus were determined by the promise of personal trust. Mark the sharp contrast between the treatment of inquirers and his treatment of his enemies. He knew equally well the teachableness of the one and the treachery of the other. Refusing to recognize any superficial or social distinctions, he put himself in the way of those men who were receptive. We find him calling men from their work, from sycamore trees, or by wayside wells.

His rebukes were not for the sins of those who followed him, but for their lack of faith : "O ye of little faith." The emphasis of his teaching fell upon a personal relation to him—personal trust. Right relation to him brought a right relation to God. To this end he worked.

THE CONFERENCE

"The Methods of the Master" is the theme for the conference. State the methods and the attitudes shown in

dealing with a sinful woman (John 4 : 1–30); a typical moralist (Mark 10 : 17–27); a wayside beggar (Mark 10 : 46–52); an intelligent rabbi (John 3 : 1–16); an impetuous disciple (John 21 : 1–25); a prejudiced unbeliever (Acts 9 : 1–22); his enemies (Matt. 22 : 15–46).

Reports of the week's work; the discussion and the delegating of new work; a season of prayer.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

John 4 : 5-42.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene: Jacob's well. (2) Characters: Jesus of Nazareth and the woman of Samaria, who living in open sin, was indifferent if not hostile to the subject of personal religion. (3) Jesus requests of her a drink of water (ver. 7, 8).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The conversation upon water (ver. 9–15). (2) The awakening of the woman's conscience (ver. 16–19). (3) The place of true worship (ver. 20–24).

3. The Crisis. Jesus announces himself as the expected Messiah (ver. 25, 26).

4. The Moment of Suspense. The woman seeks her fellow-citizens, telling them of the conversation with Jesus and asks them, "Is not this the Christ?"

5. The Outcome. Many of her fellow-citizens believed. We may be sure that the woman's faith became firmly fixed.

THE MODERN WOMAN OF SAMARIA

1. (1) Scene: Anywhere. (2) Characters: An outbreaking sinner and Christian conversationalist. (3) The conversa-

tion begins naturally. The Christian finds an opportunity to courteously make request for some small favor.

2. (1) Any commonplace subject. (2) Contains divine truth. This truth is made the instrument of calling attention to the sinner's condition and need. (3) Permit a diversion from the subject of personal sin if it is sought.

3. Present Christ as the Saviour from the power of sin (1 Tim. 1 : 15 ; Gal. 1 : 4 ; Rom. 8 : 2 ; Luke 19 : 10 ; 1 Peter 1 : 18, 19).

4. Urge the giving up of every sin ; the complete surrender to Christ (Acts 16 : 31 ; Rom. 10 : 9, 10).

5. God grant that the sinner may be saved from the power of sin.

THE CONFERENCE

Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. He sought those who were conscious of their sinfulness. He sought to awaken this consciousness in the minds of those who thought themselves righteous. He came to find and to save the lost. "God be merciful to me the sinner" is the attitude of soul the personal worker also seeks to produce. The greater part of the public ministry of Him who founded the first personal workers' circle was devoted to the producing of this attitude of soul. To this end the whole of the ministry of John the Baptist was directed. It is to-day the primary work of the Holy Spirit. The human conscience and the Holy Spirit co-operate with the personal worker in producing this attitude. In spite of the fact that the personal worker is so aided, he needs to exercise the finest tactfulness and the tenderest love toward the sinner.

This conference deals with the problem of the awakening of the soul to the sense of sin. What methods did John the Baptist use? What methods did Jesus most frequently use? What methods may the Christian conversationalist use? Scriptures that convict of sin : 1 John 1 :

8–10 ; James 4 : 17 ; Rom. 3 : 19, 20, 22, 23 ; Rom. 6 : 23 ; John 8 : 34 ; Eph. 2 : 3 ; John 3 : 19, 20. The problem is to produce in the individual a personal realization of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Reports of the week's work ; arrangements for new interviews ; a season of prayers.

III

THE STUDY HOUR—THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Matt. 19 : 16–29 ; Mark 10 : 17–30 ; Luke 18 : 18–30.

1. The Presentation of the Characters (Matt. 19 : 16 ; Mark 10 : 17 ; Luke 18 : 18). (1) Scene in Perea. The Pharisees. The mothers and the little children. Jesus and the multitude moving along the highway. The runner. (2) The rich young ruler : "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ?"

2. The Heightening of the Interest (Matt. 19 : 17–20 ; Mark 10 : 18–21 ; Luke 18 : 19–21). (1) The goodness of God. Did the young ruler recognize the divinity of Christ ? (2) The goodness of the man. The commandments. "All these have I observed. What lack I yet ?" (3) "And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him."

3. The Crisis. "One thing thou lackest." (1) The surrender of the will in loving trust demanded. (2) "Go, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (3) "Come, follow me."

4. The Moment of Suspense. "And his countenance fell at the saying . . . for he was one having great possessions."

5. The Catastrophe. "And he went away sorrowful."

THE MODERN RICH YOUNG RULER

1. (1) Scene : any place where earnest private conversation may be held. (2) Characters : a Christian conversa-

tionalist and a modern moralist. (3) The introduction of the subject of personal religion.

2. (1) Refer to the goodness and the perfect holiness of God. (2) Encourage the moralist to recount the excellencies of his own character. (3) Express your appreciation of his admirable qualities. Show him that your interest in him is deep and affectionate. A moral man is worthy of your respect and love.

3. (1) Present Christ as the moral ideal. Ask him if he is willing to order his conduct each day so as to receive the approval of Jesus Christ. Secure from him a confession of the superiority of Christ's ethical standards. (2) Contrast God's righteousness with his own (Rom. 10 : 3, 4). *a.* God's method of testing conduct (Luke 16 : 15 ; 18 : 10–14). *b.* The moralist's righteousness grows out of obedience to secondary laws ; he is a violator of God's primary law (Matt. 22 : 37, 38 ; Heb. 11 : 6 ; John 16 : 9). *c.* Show him the difference between obeying laws ordained by God for the preservation of human society, and the endeavor to keep all of God's laws under the inspiration of love to God produced by faith in Jesus Christ. (3) Having shown to him his sin, present Christ as a Saviour (Isa. 53 : 6 ; 1 Peter 2 : 24 ; Rom. 5 : 6–11 ; John 1 : 12 ; Rom. 10 : 9, 10).

4. The period should be spent in prayer. Ask him to pray with you. The Holy Spirit works mightily in this time.

5. God grant that he may not go away sorrowful.

THE CONFERENCE

The man of sterling worth and excellent character who can with complacency compare his outward life with that of the professing Christian presents a most difficult problem. It is not advisable to argue that he is a sinner because he is of the seed of Adam. Theological dogmas cannot move him. The better way is to clear away the stock arguments

of the moralist. Of these the following is selected for this cōnference : "I am as good as those I see in the church."

His right to sit in judgment upon Christians may be questioned (Matt. 7 : 1–5 ; Rom. 2 : 1–5 ; 14 : 12). It is usually better to encourage him to speak freely of his moral life, pointing out the fact that the difference between him and the Christian does not lie so much in the outward life as in the inward relation to God. By the outward life—the works of the law—no flesh shall be justified (Gal. 2 : 16 ; Rom. 3 : 19, 20 ; Luke 18 : 10–14). The Christian is justified—brought into right relation—not by his own merits. The Christian has accepted a free gift from God, which is also offered the moralist. He may seem to be as good as the Christians about him, but he is not (Rom. 10 : 3, 4). What is God's righteousness? The crucial question : "Have you sinned? What are you going to do about it?" (Rom. 14 : 12). The problem of the moralist is convicting him of sin and the need of a Saviour.

The report of the week's work ; the arranging for interviews ; a season of prayer.

IV

THE STUDY HOUR—SAUL OF TARSUS

Acts 9 : 1–22 ; 22 : 3–16 ; 26 : 7–20.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : on the road to Damascus. (2) Characters : the ascended Christ, Saul of Tarsus, a company of men. (3) Saul, after the stoning of Stephen in the persecution of "the disciples of the Lord." The journey to Damascus for the purpose of arresting the disciples there (Acts 9 : 1, 2 ; 26 : 9–12 ; 22 : 3–5).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) A light from heaven ; a voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

(Acts 9 : 3, 4 ; 22 : 6, 7 ; 26 : 13, 14.) (2) "Who art thou, Lord?" (3) "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9 : 5 ; 22 : 8 ; 26 : 15).

3. The Crisis. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9 : 5–7 ; 22 : 9, 10 ; 26 : 16–18.)

4. The Moment of Suspense. Saul blind led to Damascus (Acts 9 : 8, 9 ; 22 : 11 ; 26 : 19).

5. The Outcome. Natural and spiritual sight bestowed (Acts 9 : 10–22 ; 22 : 12–21 ; 26 : 20).

THE MODERN SAUL OF TARSUS

1. Scene : any modern community. Characters : a prominent infidel, the Holy Spirit, and an earnest Christian. The prominent infidel in his own community seizes every opportunity to criticise the churches of to-day ; assailing Christians for alleged hypocrisy and discrediting the Christian ministry in all possible ways.

2. The infidel becomes more aggressive. He determines to assail the Christian religion from the platform and through the press. He lectures upon "The Errors of the Bible," and "The Slavery of Creeds." His popularity as a lecturer increases. In a strange city he is taken suddenly ill. He faces death. The Spirit of God convicts him "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come." Fear lays hold upon him. "Without God and without hope," rings in his ears.

3. The memory of a mother's prayers revives. The text of a sermon by a minister whom he scorned comes back to his mind : "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin." Is it true?

4. To the hospital where he is now convalescing comes an earnest Christian man. The recounting of his career and his experiences since his illness began. Then he asks in the spirit that a pupil asks an honored teacher : "Is it true that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin?"

5. "Brother," replies the earnest Christian, "I know that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Believe on him and you will know it too." "I do believe. Praise the Lord."

THE CONFERENCE

For this conference it is suggested that three papers be prepared upon the following subjects :

1. The fact and the influence of Paul's conversion.
2. Paul as a soul winner.
3. Remarkable conversions in modern times.

Reports of the week ; the delegating of new work ; a season of prayer.

THE DESPONDENTS

The Spiritual Despondency of Christians
The Sorrowing Sisters
The Despondent Disciples
Peter the Backslider

I

THE STUDY HOUR—THE SPIRITUAL DESPONDENCY OF CHRISTIANS

LIFE expresses itself in the continuous readjustment of internal relations to external relations. When the individual ceases to believe that he shall make the readjustment he desires he becomes despondent. Despondency is the belief that desire will be denied. The desires of the Christian differ radically from the sinner. The Christian readjusts his life to his environment under a different principle from that which governs the sinner. Sin is lawlessness. The sinner seeks to do that which is pleasing to himself. The Christian seeks to do that which is pleasing to God. The Christian life is a relation to the will of God made possible and permanent through faith in Christ. "Thy will be done" divides the world. The Christian's despondency grows out of (1) his refusal to submit in love to God's will; (2) his doubting the revelation of God's will; (3) his violation of God's will. The causes of Christian despondency are (1) a weakening of love to God; (2) a doubting of the wisdom and the providential care of God; (3) known and unconfessed sins. The love that wanes, the doubt that grows, the sin that remains unconfessed create the spiritual despondencies of Christians. Outward circumstances only make possible and determine the modes of their expression.

Despondency is therefore a disease, and should be prescribed for only after a correct diagnosis has been made and the cause discovered. Often the condition that makes

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possible the spiritual despondency is purely physical. The liver sometimes determines the answer to the question, "Is life worth living?" In many instances the first step in ministering to the soul is to minister to the body. This method is apostolic. But bodily health does not lead necessarily to recovery of soul. It only makes this recovery easier. Spiritual despondency in the Christian is cured by restoring a right relation to his God. The personal worker is a physician unto souls, and he needs to master the science of spiritual therapeutics.

In a treatise as limited in its scope as this, the method of study and the practice of the principles can only be suggested. The three lessons that follow present the method of the Master in dealing with the three distinct forms of despondency: (1) The sorrowing sisters whose love for the Master was severely tested (John 11 : 1–46); (2) the despondent disciples who had hoped and had come to doubt their hopes (Luke 24 : 13–24); and (3) a disciple who had grievously sinned (John 21 : 15–23). In each instance the despondency was cured; in each instance the treatment of the disease was different; in each instance one common result is attained: a new and a more inspiring view is taken of the future. To Martha is given a promise that brightens; to Mary a sympathy inexpressibly deep and tender; to Cleopas and his companion a new interpretation of the Scriptures, a new vision of Christ, and a new message to declare; to Peter a restored relationship and a new and responsible task. So the Master dealt with spiritual despondency.

THE CONFERENCE

The members will give personal experiences, describing periods of spiritual despondency; symptoms, causes, and cure. State whether the source of the despondency was in the feelings, the intellect, or the will. How

did this despondency affect the outward life? What led to the cure?

Where such experiences cannot be given, the member will interview some Christian in whose life there was a period of inactivity caused by spiritual depression. Personal work among backsliders will furnish abundant material for the study of causes of spiritual decline. The value of these experiences to the student depends upon the thoroughness of his investigation and the accuracy of the accounts he secures.

From these accounts the circle will be in a position to study the perils incident to the Christian life.

The reports for the week; the delegating of new work; a season of prayer.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—THE SORROWING SISTERS

John 11 : 1–46.

1. Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene: Bethany near Jerusalem. (2) Characters: Jesus, Lazarus, the sisters Martha and Mary, the Twelve, and a company of friends of the bereaved sisters. (3) The messenger sent to Jesus. The appeal of love: "He whom thou lovest is sick" (John 11 : 1–3).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The delay of Jesus; the decision to return to Judea; the hesitation of the disciples and the courage of Thomas (John 11 : 4–16). (2) The meeting with the sisters; the discussion with Martha regarding the deathless life; the troubled spirit in the presence of the grief of Mary (John 11 : 16–35). (3) The visit to the tomb (John 11 : 36–38).

3. The Crisis. (1) The command of Jesus: "Take ye

away the stone" ; the protest of Martha (John 11 : 39). (2) The appeal of Jesus to recall his promise (John 11 : 40).

4. The Moment of Suspense. The taking away of the stone ; the prayer of Jesus ; the command, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11 : 41–43).

5. The Outcome. The resurrection of Lazarus. The effect upon the company ; some believed and some went away (John 11 : 44–46).

THE MODERN SORROWING SISTERS

1. (1) Scene : A Christian home where death has entered. (2) Characters : Two sisters and a Christian friend. (3) The friend sent for.

2. (1) The friend arrives and attempts to comfort the sisters. (2) They both complain of the injustice of God. (3) The friend asks : "Does God send trouble?" The problem of pain and death. The blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord. What our dead do for us.

3. "Will you lovingly bear your burden of grief believing that some blessing awaits that only could come through such affliction?"

4. The silent struggle of the sisters.

5. "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord."

THE CONFERENCE

Despondency of heart may be caused by affliction, the loss of loved ones, the neglect of prayer, and the minding of earthly things. Name other causes. How may the joy of salvation be suddenly lost?

When despondency is caused by affliction or the loss of loved ones two methods may be followed : the giving of Christian sympathy and the giving of Christian instruction, the emphasis to be determined by the temperament ;

Martha was benefited by instruction ; Mary was strengthened by a sympathy inexpressibly deep. The following Scriptures are of great value in dealing with the class of despondents : Rom. 8 : 28 ; Ps. 23 : 4 ; 46 : 1–3 ; Matt. 11 : 28, 29 ; 2 Cor. 12 : 9, 10 ; 1 Peter 1 : 4–8 ; 4 : 12–14 ; Heb. 12 : 11 ; 1 Thess. 4 : 13–18 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 42–44, 54–58 ; John 14 : 1–3.

The neglect of prayer leads to a loss of trust in God (1 Thess. 5 : 17; James 5 : 13–18; Luke 11 : 9–13; Isa. 40 : 31). Christians who mind earthly things become either callous or depressed (Phil. 3 : 18, 19 ; 1 John 2 : 15–17 ; Matt. 6 : 24 ; James 4 : 4–8 ; Rom. 12 : 1, 2).

Reports of the week's work ; the delegating of new work ; a season of prayer.

III

THE STUDY HOUR—THE DESPONDENT DISCIPLES

Luke 24 : 13–30.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : The way to Emmaus. (2) Cleopas, a fellow-disciple, and a stranger who later is recognized to be the risen Lord. (3) The two despondent disciples on their way to Emmaus are sorrowfully discussing the death of Jesus. A stranger joins them and courteously asks the cause of their despondency (Luke 24 : 13–17).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) The reply of Cleopas. The recounting of the recent events in Jerusalem, closing with the announcement of what the disciples had hoped, "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel" (Luke 24 : 18–21). (2) The report of his resurrection (Luke 24 : 21–24). (3) The stranger's interpretation of these events in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures (Luke 24 : 25–27).

3. The Crisis. The stranger, about to go on, is urged by the disciples to remain, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent" (Luke 24 : 28, 29).

4. The Moment of Suspense. The supper ; the stranger blessing and breaking bread (Luke 24 : 30).

5. The Outcome. Their eyes are opened and they know Jesus. He vanishes from sight. They return to Jerusalem with a new joy and the message, "The Lord is risen indeed." The meeting with the eleven apostles.

THE MODERN DESPONDENT DISCIPLES

1. (1) Scene : An American community. (2) Characters : The members of a Christian church. (3) At a service of prayer the deplorable spiritual condition of the church is generally discussed.

2. It is agreed that they meet each evening for prayer, the study of the Scriptures, and friendly inquiry as to the causes of their lack of spiritual power. Special study is given to the personal Christ. Their interest in the study grows. Centering their thought daily upon him, his spirit comes upon them.

3. A spontaneous experience meeting ; confessions of sins ; reconsecration to the service of Christ ; the humbling of the proud ; the new unity of spirit and the return of the joy of salvation.

4. A deepening of the sense of God's presence and power ; the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

5. A church with a new message and a new enthusiasm. Many converted.

THE CONFERENCE

The first Christian revival took place on the road to Emmaus. The attendance was small, but the Prince of preachers was there. The revival began in despondency. Under the direction of Jesus it became a school for the

study of the Scriptures. It continued until they saw that the crucifixion of Jesus was necessary to the fulfillment of his mission. They saw him from a new point of view. A new spirit came upon them. A new vision of Christ burst upon them and with a new message they hurried to Jerusalem. In the revival, whether we study the individual, the church, or the age, the normal periods of its progress are (1) despondency, (2) deeper and more serious study of the word, (3) the growth of interest and the burning of heart, (4) a new vision of Christ, (5) a new message regarding Christ. Verify this from history, from observation, and from experience.

The despondency that we meet in the disciples on the way to Emmaus appears also in Christians of to-day. Some are troubled by doubt, others neglect church attendance, others still no longer find pleasure in private prayer and are ashamed to confess themselves to be Christians. Select passages of Scripture for (1) those who doubt, (2) those who neglect church attendance, (3) those who no longer engage in private prayer, and (4) those who are ashamed to confess that they are Christians.

Reports of the week's work ; arranging for personal interviews ; a season of prayer.

IV

THE STUDY HOUR—PETER THE BACKSLIDER

Matt. 26 : 33–35, 58, 69, 70, 75; John 21 : 4–22.

1. The Presentation of the Characters. (1) Scene : The court of the high priest's palace. (2) Characters : " Jesus, Peter, the disciples, the band of soldiers, and the servants of the high priest. (3) Peter's boasting. Warned by his Master (Matt. 26 : 33–35 ; Mark 14 : 29–31 ; Luke 22 : 31–34 ; John 13 : 36–38).

2. The Heightening of the Interest. (1) Peter's first denial (Matt. 26 : 58, 69, 70 ; Mark 14 : 54, 66–68 ; Luke 22 : 54–57 ; John 18 : 15–18). (2) Peter's second denial (Matt. 26 : 71, 72 ; Mark 14 : 69, 70 ; Luke 22 : 58 ; John 18 : 25). (3) Peter's third denial (Matt. 26 : 73, 74 ; Mark 14 : 70, 71 ; Luke 22 : 59 60 ; John 18 : 25–27).

3. The Crisis. "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," "and he went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26 : 75 ; Mark 14 : 72 ; Luke 22 : 61, 62).

4. The Moment of Suspense. From the morning in the palace of the high priest to the morning beside the Sea of Galilee.

5. The Outcome. Peter forgiven and restored (John 21 : 4–22).

THE MODERN BACKSLIDER

1. (1) Scene : Any place suited for holding an earnest religious conversation. (2) Characters : A backslider and an apostle of to-day. (3) The apostle of to-day refers to the backslider's former interest in Christian work.

2. Tactfully the backslider is led to tell the whole history of his spiritual decline. "Do you not look back with longing to those days ?" asks the apostle of to-day.

3. The fifty-first Psalm is read. "Does that express your feeling ?" asks the faithful Christian worker (1 John 1 : 9 ; 2 : 1, 2). Tell of the backsliding and the return of Peter.

4. "Let us pray together that the joy of salvation may be restored to you," pleads the apostle of to-day.

5. May he know the joy of sin forgiven.

THE CONFERENCE

Peter, the man who said he would and did not, has relatives in every Christian church. They have undergone temptation and sometimes persecution. In certain periods of their Christian career they have displayed enthusiasm

and boldness for the faith. They fell into sin and endeavored to hide it. They found themselves retrograding. They disappeared from the church services and their only remaining relation to the church was a name upon its rolls.

The first movement in Peter's restoration was the work of memory. After the crowing of the cock it is said, "And when he had thought thereon, he wept." With those who know they are backsliders the personal worker may use the following Scriptures: 1 John 2 : 1, 2 ; 1 : 9 ; Luke 15 : 13–24 ; Eph. 5 : 14–21. For those who are tempted repeatedly : 1 Cor. 10 : 13 ; 2 Cor. 12 : 9, 10 ; Phil. 4 : 13. Urge the backslider to repent and to trust anew and more earnestly than ever before his Saviour.

What are the best means of reaching the backslider? In what way may church discipline be used for his good? What temperament predominates among backsliders? How may backsliding be prevented?

Reports of the week ; the delegating of new work ; the adding of new names ; a season of prayer.

THE CULTURE OF CHRISTIAN CONVERSATION

The Creed of the Christian Conversationalist
Perbetuation Through Reproduction

I

THE STUDY HOUR—THE CREED OF THE CHRISTIAN CONVERSATIONALIST

THERE is but one thing needful—to possess God. There is but one theme of vital and exhaustless interest—our relation to God and his world. There is but one idea that is surcharged with power sufficient to transform men—the gospel of the Son of God. There is but one endeavor among the activities of earth for the follower of Christ—the seeking and saving of the lost. There is but one medium open to all for the realization of this endeavor—Christian conversation. There is therefore but one end in man's education that will stand the test and merit the reward in that day of judgment when every idle word will be weighed—the culture of conversation and the consecration of conversation to the ministry of the gospel of Christ.

THE CONFERENCE

At this last conference a series of papers may be presented upon the work of the year. The following subjects are suggested :

1. The Visible Results of Our Work.
2. Our Most Remarkable Conversion.
3. Best Methods in Approaching the Subject of Personal Religion.
4. Soul Tragedies—Our Failures.
5. The Joy of the Soul Winner—Our Successes.
6. The Future of Our Work.

II

THE STUDY HOUR—PERPETUATION THROUGH REPRODUCTION

THE consecration of conversation to the ministry of the gospel of Christ is the need of the age. Those who have taken this course of study have made an earnest effort, so far as their influence extends, to meet this need. The year's work is ended. What of the future? Shall the work be discontinued with the termination of this course of study? This is suggested: To the last meeting invite all who have been brought to Christ through the ministry of this Circle of Personal Workers. Include in the invitation all the earnest and consecrated members of the church. Make this evening a Christian social, like to those among the early Christians—a veritable love feast. Sometime during the evening present the results of the personal work of the year, giving the names of those from the circle who are willing to become leaders of other circles of Christian Conversationalists for the coming year. Urge every Christian present to unite with some one of the new circles. Perpetuate the movement through reproduction.

Extend in succeeding years the number and the membership of the new circles until every member of the church is engaged in the winning of souls. This can be realized. Then the pastor will be the trained preacher instructing and inspiring the untrained preachers of the pew; then our churches will be made seminaries; then Christians will understand and obey the words of the Master: "AS THE FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU."

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